

Music & Letters

A Quarterly Publication

Edited by

A. H. FOX STRANGWAYS

Price Five Shillings

Vol. XII. No. 4

October, 1931

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October, 1931.



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Music & Letters

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Music and Letters

OCTOBER, 1931.

VOLUME XII

No. 4

ON WASHING IN JORDAN

THE new music, we said in the July number, was for another occasion, and that is now. The I.S.C.M. (International Society of Contemporary Music) has just been having the time of its life of nine years at Oxford, enjoying, we think, behind their compliments every minute of it. Pelting rain could not damp their spirits, and the failure of the innkeepers to keep open a café till 2 a.m. they forgave with a smile for the 'curfew city.' Oxford offers much to the eye, and it is all bunched together, and can be seen and seen again and absorbed. A festival is difficult to arrange because brilliant ideas are apt to crop up at the last moment, and modifications of plans are not easily conveyed to a scattered membership; but the generosity of the University Press and the indefatigability of Mr. Hubert Foss minimised the difficulty.

In the Cathedral, a home of the greater part of English history, and in the Town Hall, which some now alive saw a-building, we heard the 'lost causes'—Taverner and Byrd, John of Fornsete and Henry Purcell. In Holywell Music Room, seating 300, which we entered in batches, and in Wren's Sheldonian, seating 4,000, where our little company was lost, we discussed the 'impossible loyalties'—Russia, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Italy, Spain, Austria, Germany, France, England, America, all speaking in musical Esperanto.

For that was the curious point. When the committee of the Society had met to elect the international jury for next year, which judges and chooses the works to be performed, the liveliest anxiety was manifested by each member to place a countryman of his own on the panel; not that that really matters, because there is no doubt that the jury try honestly to select the best work irrespective of provenance. But when the selection comes to be performed, it is extremely difficult to detect any distinctive, national flavour. With

a few exceptions—Delannoy, Halffter, Mortari—they were apt to be cosmopolites first and patriots afterwards; and this, in so far as it involves pose, is to be regretted. It may be impossible to define nationality, but we can feel it in a kind of sincerity. Music is certainly to be classified, if anyone desires to do so, by schools and not by frontiers. It springs to birth in the individual, and he infects his immediate neighbours, and imparts to them an 'idiom,' a home-made language. But in the making of this language he is motived and biased by a host of impulses, instincts and customs, which he has quite unconsciously inherited from his own land; he is, in fact, just being himself—the Frenchman or the Spaniard or the Englishman that nature made him. That is what Naaman could not see.

When a work acquires prestige, when it is crusted over with tradition, when the composer becomes a classic, we begin to lose sight of nationality. We do not forget that Chopin was a Pole with a French entourage, but we think of him mainly as a composer who first saw how to adumbrate harmonies that till then had been solidly and solemnly stated. We call Beethoven a German, and when someone tells us he was born in Belgium and lived his life in Austria it unsettles nothing in our minds: his works still stand like a sort of Pennine range, on one side or the other of which all music lives and moves. Purcell, again; we call him an Englishman, though Dr. Grattan Flood used to aver he was Irish; and our chauvinists attach importance to this. But his value to those who look at music as a whole is not so much that he happened to be our compatriot as that he took his place with the composers of other nations in wrestling with the problems of his day—the bass aria, which had not been thought of till then, the ground bass, an inheritance from Monteverde, the harmonies of the minor scale, in which he antedated some inventions of Bach; and that in all that he wrote he relied only on musical means.

The young composers we have been hearing would probably feel that they too were wrestling with the problems of their day. But there are too many problems. The crying need for a composer is to go into retreat and think hard, not to rush about pursuing the many hares that have been started and catching none. Mr. George Gershwin, for instance, seems to be going just the wrong way to work. 'The American in Paris' is a slap-up account of novel sights and sounds, of 'life,' in fact: but there is nothing of how it appealed to him, of how he felt it, of what remained with him: he has not gone below the surface. But to go below the surface is the one thing that music can do. Taxihorn, and wire-brush, and pencil tapping on a desk spell the word Paris (when

someone has first pronounced it) but they give us nothing of the warm friendship flavoured with a little aversion with which we regard the French. The modern orchestra can get at the idea of bustle and hustle as far as it appeals to the ear—it has to leave aside the appeal to eye and nose and lungs—and it is a better instrument for the purpose than the virginals were for Mr. Byrd's 'Battell'; but music comes in only when the composer has the power to make us feel the worth-whileness, or haply, the futility of it all.

The great is on the whole the simple, and what one listens for on these occasions is singleness and clarity of purpose. Thus it was of good omen that in Goossens's second violin sonata much of his former verbosity is dropped. That this reticence proceeded to extremes in Webern's 'Symphony for small orchestra' made it more difficult to understand, but the tendency was there and not unwelcome. The wealth of praise in Vaughan Williams's 'Benedicite' is conceived in the same temper; he seems here to reap the harvest of the folk-song he sowed, and the simple turns out at last to be the great. In this, and in the pavan in 'Job,' he shows himself to be a master of ecstasy; and ecstasy can, after all, say nothing but 'how utterly glad I am.' When this simplicity is not there, the layman usually comes away from the music saying that he can't hear the tune, and people laugh at him, as if he meant an eight-bar thing ending in a half-close. But isn't he right, in principle? Do not the undesirable complexities arise from running harmonic and contrapuntal theories to death? There are composers who forget, in this connection, the simple little fact that before they begin to speak their audience has not the slightest notion what they are going to say, and who, though perhaps unaware of the havoc they are making, deliberately lay false scents.⁽¹⁾ Naaman thought any water would do.

Of these complexities 'it is not holy to speak.' They are the things that are most often analysed and that bear analysis least well. Atonalities, bitonalities, tritonalities and their peers are best heard and not seen, best accepted before there has been time to analyse; as when Brahms writes a particularly ravishing variation, and we presently say—'Hullo! it's a strict canon,' or somebody else makes us eerily uncomfortable about 'Herne the Hunter,' and we find afterwards he has been talking in two simultaneous keys.

We debate and debate over schools and idioms, antiquarian and modern, theoretical and practical, and never seem to get the feel of music out of it all. We know quite well what we want. We want to be rapt out of ourselves. Not a mere change, like a holiday after long

⁽¹⁾ Do look at a delightful little article under that title in Fowler's *Modern English Usage*.

routine, or gymnastics after a sedentary occupation, or a game of patience to unravel the mind after too much thinking, but something intrinsically worth while, something that can become a passion, something fine and tender, something real. We want to breathe this thing into the lungs of the soul, just for its own sake, and for ours; it will go out again as carbon-something, but we shall be different: we shall be alive in fact, not dead, in the part of us that matters. Any one of the arts will do it, for this man or that; but music seems to do it universally, though in different degrees. Music is more universal than, for instance, the art of painting is, because in it the act of creation is twofold: pictures are only painted, but music is both written and played, and since one man writes but another plays, many more participate in this art than in that.

Perhaps as many look at pictures (structural sights) as listen to tunes (structural sounds), but neither of these actions has anything like the effect of the act of creating. Visiting picture galleries, attending concerts, motoring round the cathedral cities, are excellent ways of spending time—better than bridge and cocktail-parties—but they address the mind rather than the soul. How much more we get out of a poem if we have tried to write one! I saw this in quite a simple way lately. I had often watched morris and country dances, and thought them always likable and sometimes lovely. But in July the biography of Cecil Sharp was entrusted to me—and, by the by, if anyone has letters from him, or other interesting material, a saying, a story, a snapshot that they would be willing to part with temporarily, I should be grateful for the loan. Since almost all that we know of those dances comes from his work at them, I felt that the least I could do would be to learn how they are done. So I tried. Of course my dancing will never be lovely, but when I look now at others, theirs is much more than that: it is real. They are doing something they would want just as much to do if nobody were looking on. They are creating, if it is only patterns in the air which vanish as soon as made; and by those patterns they look into the eternal verities as truly as by the age-long songs they sing. These songs and dances are thought a little childish by those who only look on and don't do them. Well, even if they were, it is good for all of us to do a childish thing now and again: Elisha's messenger said seven times.

I should never have known all that if I had not sung and danced a little with my own v.c.'s and my own toes. People are apt to forget that they have vocal cords and toes and that nature meant these to be used, or else to atrophy; or they are too shy about them; or they get the idea from concerts and ballets that their efforts are things to be paraded. But either of them can express a good deal of

music when no one is looking, so to say, and there is much honest pleasure in getting a thing to go a little better than it did yesterday. A woman down the street trying to do that gives less pain, too, than the wordless, soul-less loud speaker that is never better or worse than correct; and mothers of families, dancing on a bank holiday what they remember of the frolics of their youth, more pleasure than girls standing on their heads in the Russian ballet.

Then there is 'Appreciation' of which we hear so much: and what a comment on an age that principally listens to what others make! Its chief merit is that it comes pat to the occasion. One wonders, only, what people like the crusty S. S. Wesley, the drastic Captain Cooke, the sensitive Bennett, the masterful Zachariah Buck, or their present-day representatives, whose business it was and is to get things up to the scratch to the minute, would have thought about it. They knew that the learning of music, the music that is worth anything, is and must be the arrow that flieth by day and the buggy by night. When I was taught by Dr. Buck he hammered at the things that were wrong, and then got his assistant to write out for me the conventional history, from Guido onwards, which was all the appreciation there was in those days. Perhaps it would have been as well if I had been told about binary form, but it was better still to hear it first in the notes as I unravelled them. A pleasure earned is worth two given. But the good days of the stick in the right hand and a sixpence in the left, and a body of choristers renowned through the five neighbouring counties and coming back after half a life-time to see the man who put the fear of God into them, as hounds leave the man who feeds them for the man who hunts them, are gone. It is all done by kindness now. One wonders if there is any more music in it. Naaman, you remember, expected the prophet to 'strike his hand over the place and recover him.'

Lastly, there is the question of embodying folk tunes in composition, which has come in for a good deal of obloquy. This would not have been incurred if people (myself at one time included) had not exaggerated the importance of the modes, some going so far as to say, or to imply, that a song was not a folk-song in the true sense unless it was 'in a mode.' But these same modes that we think of as old English are equally in vogue in other countries; and it is impossible to find anything distinctive in the French or Irish or Hindu use of the dorian, *qua* dorian; such distinction as there may be is common to other modes in use in the particular country. The fact that a song is in a mode is no more than a sign that it has reached us as it was

sung without instrumental accompaniment⁽²⁾; and a collateral proof of this is that the dances, which involved instruments from the start, are not in modes.

Typical songs then are in a mode: typical dances are in a key. With many exceptions and a large no man's land, this holds of most European countries. If we want to see what distinguishes one country from another we must look at such things as rhythm (often influenced by the language), melodic figures (which come into and go out of fashion) and compass (which has something to do with climate and geography); but it would be impossible to apply these as tests for a particular tune. Listen to one or two. Take 'Newcastle'—the second half, the place where the dancers form in two lines twice over (the terror of the beginner, a sort of fourth and fifth Proposition of the First Book).



What a breezy, ocean-going sound! You can imagine a sailor coming

(2) Technically, this appears to be what happens. In the voice, under favourable conditions,* the third harmonic (the twelfth above the note) is prominent. On instruments, especially those with long thin strings, such as harp (Irish, Welsh), or vina (Indian), the fifth harmonic (the major third) is prominent. From the combination of quint (=twelfth) and octave, the only intervals that can be won are the quart and the tone: and a scale confined to these is pentatonic. But when the tierce (major third) is present to the ear, the interval it makes with the quart is a semitone, and the complete scale is then possible. Hence pentatonic is vocal, diatonic instrumental. An incident which throws light on this is that when in the Appalachian mountains, where there are no instruments, the same songs were heard as had been sung in England 200 years before, they were found as a rule to be more pentatonic. Now 200 years ago—indeed, much earlier—the complete diatonic scale was in use here. It seems likely, then, that those mountaineers had received some at least of their songs in the diatonic and, being without instruments, had, in their actual singing, relapsed into the pentatonic (vocal) scale.

Secondly, though the singer can theoretically take into his song any note within his compass, yet practically, as a result of all the songs he has sung—as his personal equation—he keeps to a particular path, or scale: let us say, for arguments' sake, the dorian† (white notes up or down from D). D is his tonic; but as he sings on, it may happen that the words, or the character of his voice, or some peculiar resonance in his surroundings, forces some other note—E, perhaps—into the position of tonic. And now what is he to do? He can't sing a dorian suddenly from E, because the old one from D, which has two notes different, is still in his ear. So he sings in the dorian from D, but from an E tonic, i.e., he changes his mode to phrygian.

But instruments can play a dorian from any note of the scale provided they have the twelve notes of the octave; and do, without any confusion. The player has not to 'find,' i.e., conceive, his notes like the singer: he merely puts down a finger.

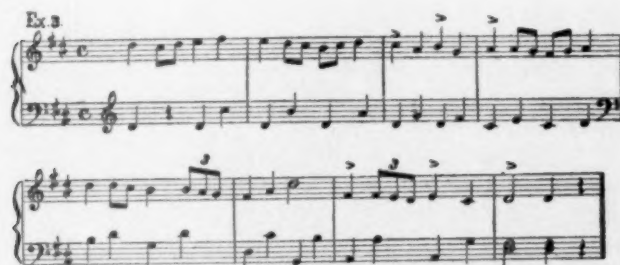
* A man's voice rather than a woman's; under a roof rather than out of doors.

† There is some reason for thinking this may have been the earliest mode in most countries.

home, dancing it, and giving it the name of his ship. Or this, 'The Boatman,'



and you hear the water clucking against the sides as she lies at the quay. And another fascinating thing, with its three truculent stamps, that I forget the name of,



—oh, yes; 'Stepback,' a morris. I believe most people hearing these for the first time in the middle of the Sahara would say they were English, but why, I don't know.

Where composers who incorporate, or allude to, or imitate their national tunes go wrong seems to be when they treasure the modality and miss the nationality. Our tunes have more downrightness and less poetry than the Irish, less other-worldliness than the best of the Scotch, a larger compass than the French, more body than the Scandinavian, less logic and more fling than the German, less grace

and more backbone than the Italian; and we carol rather than sing them. Where these things are kept and temptations are resisted—the temptation to be archaic for archaism's sake, and the temptation to adorn them with flowers grown on the banks of Abana and Pharpar—the music takes on a native freshness, and in biblical phrase, 'its flesh comes again like unto the flesh of a little child.'

EDITOR.

VERDI AS MUSICIAN

VERDI is having a new vogue outside Italy. Even in our non-operative country the warm current of a freshly urged appreciation is felt. Mr. F. Bonavia has written a capital book whose only fault is its scant allotment of space to musical analysis; Mr. Francis Toye is about to publish another⁽¹⁾ which one has reason to think will not be lacking in ardour. The Old Vic has given a creditable show to 'La Forza del destino' and Covent Garden, beside staging the current works regularly enough, even went so far one season—which is as far as any reasonable person would expect it to go—as to consider a revival of 'Macbeth.'

Whether this movement is to be more than a craze remains to be seen. Meanwhile, let us be grateful for a fashion that is very wearable indeed. More than that, let us try to secure it permanence by divesting it of its look of modish affectation. The way to do this is to study Verdi seriously.

More than one earnest musician will ask whether he is worth such attention, whether indeed there is anything in him to engage the critical mind outside a theatre. One can but try to convince the sceptics. Most of them will concede that inside the opera house Verdi is a satisfactory artist; but their tendency as musicians is to attribute his success to his being, as they will condescendingly allow, a magnificent dramatist, a composer endowed with unfailing stagecraft. They never seem to ask themselves whether it can be possible for an opera composer to be a magnificent dramatist without being also a magnificent musician. Is there a single instance of a theatre composer who kept his work alive for many years—to say nothing of a rebirth of his half-forgotten operas—on the strength of dramatic power alone? Indeed, what is dramatic power in opera if it is not musicianship pure and simple, properly applied to a particular purpose?⁽²⁾

What operas of any fame are there in which dramatic interest predominates over musical? Marschner's? They are dead. Meyerbeer's?

(1) This appeared after the present article was written. It is reviewed on another page of this number.

(2) There are rare cases of superior musicianship concerned with opera, yet not ideally applied: to wit, Beethoven's 'Fidelio' and the operas of Cherubini. They are due to a casual preoccupation with an uncongenial medium.

They make but ghostly appearances in the haunts of a stale repertory. Those of scores of Italians like Ponchielli, Giordano, Montemezzi, Zandonai? They are moribund.⁽³⁾ In their dead-alive company Verdi would be by this time, had he been a dramatic manipulator only, however eminent. As it is, he not only lives but flourishes more than ever to-day, and that because he was a great musician. I do not say a faultless musician; but I hope to show that he is in the company of those absolute masters of their art whose faults one accepts willingly as part of the individual make-up of a sturdy creative personality.

With what cubbish superiority soever one may have sneered at Verdi in younger years (I plead guilty), one learns to look forward to the prospect of hearing one of his operas with a thrill. It is, one knows, going to be a meeting with genius in its apt environment, an experience such as only two other masters of music can always be counted on to offer in the theatre—Mozart and Wagner. After them, who is to be encountered there so unquestioningly? Without them, it comes to choosing this or that man's outstanding masterpiece: Purcell's 'Dido and Æneas,' Gluck's 'Orfeo,' Weber's 'Freischütz,' Moussorgsky's 'Boris Godounov,' Bizet's 'Carmen' or Strauss's 'Rose Cavalier,' let us say. These given their due, we descend to preferences accounted for not by any consensus of opinion, but only by individual taste. Monteverdi, Handel, Cimarosa, Bellini, Rossini, Borodin, Berlioz, Smetana, Gounod, Puccini, Debussy, all give pleasure to different people in different places. Verdi, like Mozart and Wagner, is universal.

And when it comes to that, who would not rather listen to an early opera by Verdi, say 'I Lombardi' or 'Ernani,' than to Wagner's 'Rienzi'? Again, comparing the two masters' actually completed first works for the stage, there can be little doubt that 'Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio' would make some sort of a live entertainment, while 'Die Feen' can be no more than a study of absorbing interest to a handful of historians.

No disparagement of Wagner is implied here, even if we agree that he matured more slowly than Verdi. It must be borne in mind that the Italian settled down without protest to an accepted convention, whereas the German from the first began to grope towards a new manner. Still, the fact remains that Verdi is not only comparable to Wagner, but may be regarded from certain viewpoints as actually superior to him. It is simply a matter of creeds. The choice between the two is not determined by any radical difference of eminence, but

(3) Puccini would seem to be an exception, but I do claim a superior musicianship for him, though not one actually in excess of his stagecraft.

by the question whether, as musicians, we accept the Reformation or prefer to remain Romans.

Verdi, though not a reformer, is a liberal-minded catholic. If he was not for thoroughgoing changes, he was amenable to gradual evolution along rational lines of his own. His life-work is one of steady progress. That is why, as Mr. Bonavia points out, it is wrong in his case (if indeed it can be right in anybody's) to speak of three styles.

As for the current theory that Verdi was indebted to Wagner in his later years, it is not worth refuting nowadays. Verdi is the opposite pole to Wagner. Much of the disparagement to which serious musicians have subjected him is due to their failure to recognise this fact. They dislike him because he is not like Wagner instead of admiring his independence, and where they can no longer withhold admiration, they must needs seek an approach to Wagner in his work.

Their great objection to Verdi is that he is theatrical—a terrible indictment indeed to level at a man who writes for the theatre! If they intend the term to designate quite literally something written for the stage, they may well use it, so long as they agree to imply that it is suitably written; but if they are thinking of something æsthetically inferior to music of absolute worth, then the answer is emphatically that they are arguing on a false postulate.

Well, the word theatrical does convey some sort of obloquy, and this will not do for Verdi. Let us say, then, that his operas are not theatrical but dramatic. So is the Requiem in a smaller and, from the composer's own point of view, quite permissible degree. It is worth observing here that a purely superficial stage device which occurs regularly in the operas is entirely absent from the Requiem. This is the long protraction of closing chords in rhythmically broken patterns at the end of a scene or act, which is simply the dramatist's 'curtain' converted into music. Verdi knows this to be a necessary evil and never makes the mistake of the inferior musician, who will use a convention without knowing what it stands for.

We must now try to draw a distinction between what is theatrical and what dramatic. Two well-known examples may do it for us. Mascagni's '*Cavalleria rusticana*' is a piece of sheer theatricality; Verdi's '*Rigoletto*'⁽⁴⁾ is pure musical drama. The heroines of these

(4) Only about half of Verdi's operas (and the Requiem) are referred to in this article, so chosen that works of every period are included in more or less equal numbers. The selection has been made in order to render reference not too troublesome and expensive for those who wish to consult the scores. The following abbreviations are used throughout this article:—Aid. '*Aida*'; B.M. '*Un Ballo in maschera*'; D.C. '*Don Carlos*'; Ern. '*Ernani*'; Fal. '*Falstaff*'; F.D. '*La Forza del destino*'; L.M. '*Luisa Miller*'; Lom. '*I Lombardi*'; Mac. '*Macbeth*'; Mas. '*I Masnadieri*'; Oth. '*Othello*'; Req. Requiem; Rig. '*Rigoletto*'; S.B. '*Simon Boccanegra*'. The pagination referred to is that of Ricordi's vocal scores.

two operas are in much the same plight, and we sympathise with both; but we cannot possibly, unless we be utterly devoid of taste, shed tears over Santuzza, whereas it is quite difficult, at any reasonably good performance and in any but an entirely unfavourable mood, not to cry over Gilda. Now what is it that makes Santuzza a hard creature who flaunts her woes shamelessly and Gilda a sensitive and lovable girl whose tragedy touches every heart? Not any difference in the librettos, which is not appreciable. It is that Mascagni's music is actually flaunting and Verdi's touching. But why so? Because the former exploits every cheap effect within his reach, the latter makes every point by purely musical and musicianly means, again only so far as his own not all-embracing resources and ideas go, but thus far wholly satisfactorily. In other words, Mascagni imposes on us by theatrical means of no specifically musical merits, while Verdi's music is artistic according to its own æsthetic code and hence not theatrical but, since it also fits the scenic situation, ideally dramatic.

Let us look at Gilda's 'Caro nome' (Rig. I. ii. 110). It is as shapely and economical as a Scarlatti sonata. You can do with it what you cannot conceivably do with any passage from Mascagni—play it on the piano and find that it makes a faultless piece of music quite apart from the stage situation which it fits so miraculously. There is a principal theme which is not only the very picture of an innocent young girl very much in love and repeating with a tremulous heart the name of her lover she has just heard for the first time, but a symphonic thesis developed with the strictest musical logic and deliciously varied in a coda that presents it again in a refined form, letting it linger as if reluctant to die away in that 'last sigh' in which Gilda declares she will still breathe the 'dear name.' The second theme is no less beautifully treated, in spite of the fact that the composer keeps the requirements of a coloratura singer constantly in mind, and the episodes that follow it drive irresistibly towards the coda by way of a climax and that lovely staccato dying fall (see Ex. 1 below). Even the cadenza, though an unwelcome excrescence, is rightly placed, which cannot be said of the majority of Verdi's vocal flourishes. They are, in fact, a serious blemish on his art. Coming at the very end of a song, as they generally do, without an instrumental peroration to balance them, they produce the uncomfortable feeling of a violent wrench. There are two particularly bad examples in this very opera: the Duke's 'Parmi veder le lagrime' and Rigoletto's 'Miei signori' (Rig. II. 188 and 179).

I have just referred to an incident in 'Caro nome' as a dying fall.

The description may be too fanciful to serve to identify the passage, so here it is:—



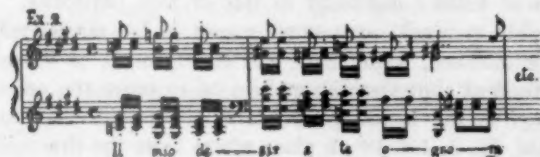
It will do at the same time to demonstrate the distinction of Verdi's musical notions. We have here one of those ideas that are perennial surprises. No amount of hearing can wear off its ingratiating charm.

To try to account for the fine quality of a particular fragment of musical invention is to come up against the very boundary line of knowledge, on the hither side of which lie the vague regions of intuition and taste; but at the risk of being caught in a bog, one must try to get to the bottom of this ultimate æsthetic question. It is matter for a book on the whole of music, but here Verdi may help us to a sample.

One of the tests of quality, I think, is memorability, and Verdi, of course, stands that test magnificently. An opera by, let us say, Giordano, acts on the memory like water on a duck's back; one by Verdi remains indelibly engraved on it after a first hearing. You may not be able to visualise all its features, just as you cannot always see the face of a beloved person with your mind's eye, but you carry them in your heart ready for instant recognition.

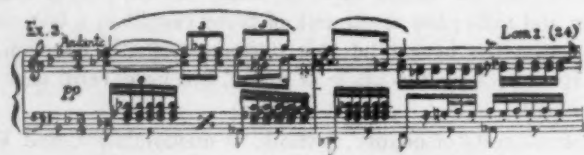
Through another test, that of lasting surprise, Verdi comes equally well. It is highly characteristic of much of his music that it lingers in one's memory in a slightly different form from that which it actually takes. And what is significant is that it is invariably more distinguished than one had thought. A case in point is the Aida theme (at the opening of the overture and elsewhere), which few people, I fancy, keep in their heads just as it is, nor in so refined a form.

But let us keep to my dying fall. For a long time, even after several casual hearings of the opera and the song, I persisted in thinking that the passage quoted above went something like this:—



One expects, I suppose, a continuous pattern of melodic movement up a third and down a fifth, and the surprise lies in the change to the downward movement of a fourth in the middle. Perhaps it may be assumed that Verdi himself at first had such a pattern in his mind. If so, he made an astonishing improvement by avoiding those repeated middle E's towards the end and by making that interesting chromatic approach to the bass dominant through the upper semitone instead of setting down the conventional subdominant-dominant-tonic cadence.

Verdi's music is full of such subtleties. Often they are gained by the quite simple expedient of inverting his chords and placing their bass notes in an unexpected position. Simple—yes; but like all divine simplicities, it took a genius to use it at precisely the right moment. A striking example of this discriminating removal of the bass out of the root position is to be found in so early an opera as 'I Lombardi' (1849), in this Bellini-ish passage:—



and another in 'La Forza del destino' (Leonora's aria):—



In the space of an article it is necessary to limit oneself to isolated specimens of Verdi's ingenuity in this or that particular. It is not even possible to touch upon every aspect of his musicianship. One might, for instance, argue from his management of basses that he was an excellent contrapuntist and go on to prove the assertion with such things as the handling of double counterpoint in the 'Aida' March (Aid. II. ii. 117-18), a place where from the dramatic point of

view such a musical effort was superfluous, and the original stretto (with entries on A \flat , F \sharp , E \flat , D \flat) in the second Requiem fugue (Req. 202).

An interesting case of the inversion of chords in the most effective way possible is this extraordinarily modern passage in Iago's false account of Cassio's dream:—



This points forward as far as Delius, but one may imagine a smaller composer hot on the scent of such an innovation letting his harmony progress in a more rigid formation, thus:—



All was grist to Verdi's mill, but the miller was intent on doing his job honestly. Whatever the occasion demanded, that he would furnish, not caring whether it be ever so conventional or ever so daring. He was quite capable when it suited him of stringing together a series of chords in one single position after the manner of Ex. 6. The following passage from 'Falstaff,' which is as astonishing to-day as ever, will bear witness:—



The descent of common chords at the close of the second act of 'Othello' is another case in point (Oth. II. 201).

While we are on the subject of modernities, it is perhaps worth while pointing out that one of Strauss's favourite chords seem to be a Verdian heirloom.⁽⁵⁾ We find it in the final scene of 'Aida' as the

(5) Carl Moor's song, 'O mio castel paterno' (Mas. I. 8), by the way, looks suspiciously like Strauss's model for the tenor's aria in the first Act of 'The Rose Cavalier.'

last of those pangs of beauty with which that opera so sweetly afflicts our hearts :—



Verdi can write pungent dissonances, which have the greater effect for coming rarely, as in the tremendous moment where Othello has forced Desdemona to her knees :—



Again he can make the boldest use of a device such as consecutive fifths, which were still a shocking trespass upon musical propriety in 1887. In Iago's 'Credo' he writes them thus :—



Verdi's main pursuit is that of beauty. Even when he has ugly situations to deal with he contrives to give us music that holds the ear spellbound. But, finding at the same time the musical expression that exactly fits the situation, he achieves a quite extraordinary individuality at such junctures. I do not say originality, for he is not precisely an original composer. For that he too often took things as he found them, from Bellini, from Rossini, from Donizetti, from Meyerbeer. Sometimes he was content to let the music of such people simply run over into his without doing a great deal to colour it to his own dye. The overture to 'Luisa Miller' is a charming piece of Rossini; Bellini's shallow brilliance we find in Amalia's 'Lassù risplendere' (Mas. III. 137), his march tunes in 'I Masnadieri' (III. 144) and in 'Macbeth' (I. 19-20), and his type of *cantabile* in a duet between Ernani and Elvira (Ern. II. 154-7), with accompanying figures pointing directly to Bellini's influence on Chopin. As for that matter, it would be quite possible to make a pianistic disguise of the

cabaletta in 'I Lombardi' (II. 155 *et seq.*) that would pass for one of his mazurkas, polonaises or nocturnes, according to the treatment.

There are traces, too, of composers farther afield. The handling of a recitative (Mas. II. 113-14), the line of an aria (Mac. II. 113-15), is occasionally astonishingly Weberish, and the drop into a remote key without modulation in the chorus of nuns in 'I Lombardi' seems to come straight from Schubert:—



With the latter he also shares a love of unexpected exchanges between major and minor. Even Berlioz appears, perhaps not unnaturally, in the incantation scene in 'Macbeth,' which also develops the Mephisto Waltz eruption that marked the romantic music of the mid-nineteenth century.⁽⁶⁾

Still, one has to look hard enough to collect a few examples of obvious influence in Verdi's whole output, and even where they are found they are seen to have become individualised in passing through his mind. This individuality of his is as much harmonic as melodic, for all that people will allow him to be little more, from a purely musical point of view, than a great melodist. It is significant that the musical examples so far given, though not designedly chosen for that purpose, show a predominantly harmonic interest. Verdi not only finds endless new combinations, but new blends arrived at by apt chordal distribution, which is a much more musicianly procedure than that of merely concocting unheard-of mixtures. The striking of twelve o'clock in the last scene of 'Falstaff' is striking in another sense quite as much owing to the wonderful spacing and inverting of the chords as to their actual constitution (Fal. III. ii. 347). One feels, too, that if the Windsor clock had chimed midnight according to the modern continental timetables, he could have found another twelve combinations without straining his resources so far as to destroy the unity of this passage, which is kept with an unfailing instinct, for all its manifold diversity.

'Falstaff' is the last of the operas; but harmonic nicety is to be found quite early in Verdi. It matures and widens its scope as he gathers experience, but it is a fundamental, not an acquired artistic

(6) Mr. Toye, in a lecture, talks of Beethoven and instances the motif running through 'La Forza del destino,' which first appears at the opening of the prelude. No doubt he is thinking of the 'Egmont' overture.

possession. In the 'Lombardi' of 1849, for instance, we find this arresting turn :—



and Giselda's prayer in the same opera contains phrases which point straight to the Requiem of 1874 and would do no discredit to Desdemona's 'Ave Maria' in 'Othello.' Here is one :—

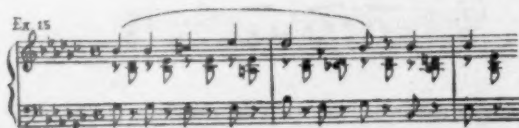


Sometimes a harmonic turn makes all the difference to the melodic line, as in the 'Oro supplex,' which is one of the most poignantly beautiful tunes of the Requiem (Req. 80). Elsewhere it is possible to feel that such a turn would have made a difference for the better, and one misses it, however fine the melody may be in itself. A good case in point is the surging, impassioned love duet in the first Act of 'La Forza del destino,' which begins thus :—



The exact repetition of the first four bars before the music turns the corner into a new stretch of fascinating melody is felt to be a flaw. One expects at least a slightly different harmonic shading the second time to give the song continuity; or better still, a small deviation in

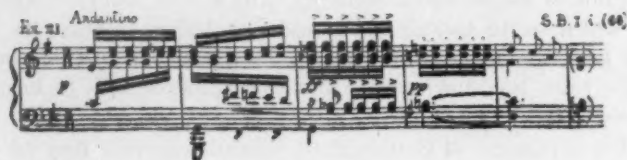
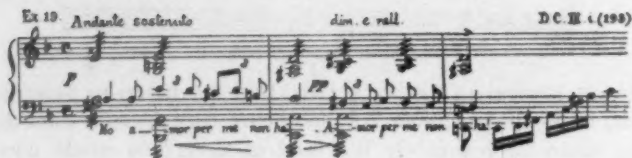
the melodic line which the harmony is bound to follow. Something like this seems to be called for at the repeat of the third and fourth bars :—



I do not pretend to correct Verdi. Had he chosen to write such a variant, he would have done it much better than I can. I am merely putting down approximately the kind of thing one would normally expect of him at this stage of a tune. There are plenty of instances to be found in his work where he does introduce melodic and harmonic deflections with the most consummate skill. The latter occur particularly in cadences. He cannot forbear to use the full close in moments of emotional stress; but in his hands it rarely annoys the hearer as a conventional expedient. It can, on the contrary, become a most moving culmination of a melody or of a whole scene. One need only think of Desdemona's outburst, 'Ah! Emilia, addio!' (Oth. IV, 337), which on the face of it is an ordinary Italian cadence, but being justly placed in the context and set down with an infallible instinct for the right line and spacing and colour, never fails to bring the listener to the verge of tears.

A few specimens of characteristic Verdian cadences may be given from his less familiar works. The reader's memories of the well-known operas and of the Requiem, which is worth special attention in this connection, will easily supplement them. (In all but one of these examples the voice parts are omitted.)





In Ex. 16 we have a very interesting early indication of how Verdi likes to throw the weight of interest into the cadence. The episode from which this is torn is one of those rather superficially fiery tunes which abound in 'Ernani'—C major with a curve to A minor on one side and a more interesting one through C minor to E flat major on the other. But in the cadence modulations suddenly coil themselves closely together. Not only do we pass through three keys in as many bars, but our ear receives two shocks of pleasant surprise, first when the dominant of F major leads unexpectedly to A major and then when E major, apparently a dominant preparing for A minor, changes to that of C major.

Next, in Ex. 17, a quite ordinary cadential progression is made interesting and extremely beautiful by chromatic inner parts, while Ex. 18 shows that diminished sevenths, which Verdi once explicitly deprecated as too easy a subterfuge, could be used by him with charm and distinction. They serve here definitely as dissonances demanding

would be wholly admirable in the context, were it not for the defect of repetition earlier in the tune. The ideal melodic conduct is that of the duet, 'Si, fuggiam,' between Aida and Radamès (Aid. III. 240-2), where we have a statement, a restatement with a modulatory change, a contrast leading to an expectant pause, and then a second modification of the original strain touching a higher note than has been reached before and marking a third stage of climax. It is by this cunning third-degree method that Verdi succeeds best in forcing a confession of allegiance from his hearers.

One might go on drawing distinctions until one caught Verdi doing some definitely inferior things—a meandering tune with a shift of harmony (D.C. III. i. 236-7), an orchestral or choral inanity (Ern. II. 131; L.M. I. ii. 85-92; Mac. II. 128; Mas. II. 108), or whole stretches of indifferent dance music, as in the first act of 'Rigoletto' or the last of 'Un Ballo in maschera.' (The shallow ballroom music in 'Traviata' is justified because it characterises the people in the opera and outlines their environment.) But when all is said, it is astonishing how little can be singled out from his total output for which the excuse of dramatic aptness at least cannot be made. However, purely musical considerations alone surprisingly often exonerate him, and when they fail, his unreckoning enthusiasm, his almost passionate desire to be popular, not from vanity, but from a sincere affection for his public, do the rest. It is all very well to say that 'Trovatore' and 'Traviata' are mere repositories of barrel organ tunes; but if Verdi is responsible for every barrel organ in Italy and every Italian organ grinder elsewhere who daily sings with the minstrel and errs with the courtesan, it is his merit rather than his fault. The most vulgar of his melodies began by being so in the proper sense of the word. A dozen or two have strayed into the gutter, but he wrote a dozen hundred that have kept their self-respect, as with a little more luck and less fatal attraction any might have done.

What is remarkable about Verdi's best melodies is that they are not only good in themselves, but always curiously appropriate to the situation in hand, even when at first sight they may appear almost ludicrously incongruous. (At first sight, I say, not at first hearing.) The secret of this appropriateness is doubtless that they fit in with the drama without being sacrificed to it musically. They remain fully developed tunes, whatever may happen on the stage. Such a dramatic cutting short of a melodic line as in Maximilian Moor's lament (Mas. III. 163-4), which is only too obviously effective, occurs rarely. The true Verdian procedure is not to fly off at a tangent in a highly dramatic moment, but to keep to his melodic idea and to

increase the tension less by insistence on accent than by a greater amplitude of melody. Rigoletto's despairing duet with the love-distracted Gilda (Rig. II. 189-94) is a familiar instance, and another of interest may be found in 'Luisa Miller' (II. ii. 189-200).

An admirable and especially musical device of the same order may be instanced from the former opera (Rig. I. ii. 84-90). It is that of first stating a melody plain and then, when the situation requires it, adding something else: in this case Rigoletto's solicitude for his daughter's safety and her tender response to it.

Verdi's workmanship on such occasions is impeccable: hence the impression of a limpid beauty even where he studies the dramatic exigencies, as in the agitated duet between Amneris and Radamès (Aid. I. i. 14-17), which becomes a trio after the entry of Aida, who superimposes her own slow melody upon the rapid conversation—a perfect specimen of a dramatic aside converted into its musical equivalent. On a larger scale, we may find an example of the splendid craftsmanship that lets drama and music flow on simultaneously and intermingling to perfection at the opening of 'Un Ballo in maschera,' where the material of the overture (with fugal treatment) is drawn into the first scene for page after page with an almost symphonic effect.

The most convincing mark of the musician who will not subordinate his art to the librettist's, though he is intent on co-ordinating the two, is probably the gradual subtilising of the recitative in Verdi's operas. His recitative is often interesting from the very beginning, but there are too many arid patches of it in the early works. In 'Aida' recitative has all but disappeared, and what there is of it is not a conventional filling of a chasm between one set piece and the next, but a transition of musical significance. True, it is kept on a low level of invention, but that is done on purpose. Verdi, in fact, is past-master in the art of distributing degrees of intensity throughout a scene or an act in such a way as to grip and relax the hearer's interest just as he sees fit. We are in his hands: he sways us by his unfailing instinct for doing the right thing at the right moment.

One of the most interesting passages combining a new treatment of recitative with a subdued instrumental accompaniment is the conversation of Violetta and Alfredo in the first act of 'La Traviata,' a rapid interchange of phrases which are almost speech, with frivolous dance music played off-stage. Attention should be given also to the opening scenes of 'Rigoletto,' 'Simon Boccanegra,' 'La Forza del destino' and 'Aida,' where we drop into the middle of a lightly-sung conversation and, for music, are forced to listen to the orchestra,

Verdi, for all his magnificent vocal writing, is by no means always intent on bringing the singer to the fore. There are countless passages in his works where the voice is kept to one note while the orchestra carries on the music. Again, he is fond of giving the voice a secondary place in a duologue with an instrumental strain (D.C. IV. 273), or of assigning it the lower part in a passage in thirds and sixths, a device to which he seems almost as much attached as Schubert.

Verdi's mastery of distributing the musico-dramatic weight over a whole act may be studied by his handling of situations where suspense is followed by excitement, *e.g.*, the last acts of 'Rigoletto,' 'La Traviata' and 'Othello.' But this is touching upon the aspect of his genius which I have agreed to take for granted. Verdi as a musician is subject enough for an article: indeed it could grow into a volume before one had done with praise. There would be occasion for blame too, and more than there is room for in the pages given up to this study; but for the moment my aim was to help readjusting the balance of judgment. Though this essay is itself admittedly ill-balanced, I hope that it may add a fraction to the weight of favourable criticism which is now accumulating against those who have too thoughtlessly discredited a great master of music with all sorts of prejudices and partisanships.

ERIC BLOM.

EUGÈNE GOOSSENS

A NATURAL genius for technique is the privilege of few composers. Goossens may be classified among the favoured exceptions. From the outset of his career he has been endowed with expressive skill to a degree attained, more frequently, only after prolonged and careful study. In the earliest published works one may look in vain for signs of tentative craftsmanship common to the efforts of an apprentice. His facility caused amazement when Goossens was first heard. It seemed uncanny that so young an artist should manifest such complete dexterity. Regarding choice of material he proved less fortunate; and it was customary to hear his music described as scintillating but deficient in emotion. To a certain extent the label still adheres.

There is evidence that Goossens' technical adroitness has sometimes worked heavily against his interests. He has shown, at times, too great a readiness to meet the occasion with neat and mannerly competence as a substitute for real thought. Where discrimination guards him against offering the first unconsidered impression occurring to his mind, he is capable of fine and significant music. Notwithstanding a prolific output we find much to show a true co-operation between mind and intellect. From the beginning Goossens has never lacked imaginative qualities, although their strength has greatly increased with experience. Since he began to see his way clearly his sense of beauty, which is both delicate and subtle, has also gained in depth. The principal works reconcile convincingly an elegance of style and solidity of ideas. To appreciate these positive attributes the composer's achievements repay selective rather than comprehensive examination.

Until the appearance of his 'String Quartet in C,' Goossens' individuality was largely obscured by his predilection for the mannerisms of contemporary French and Russian music. This Quartet establishes the beginning of inventive self-reliance. Great personal accomplishment as a violinist enables Goossens to write for strings with a confident touch. In each movement he contrives a warmth of personal feeling whose intensity is immeasurably superior to more decorative and superficial endeavours belonging to an earlier period. Many passages reveal an attraction beyond the region of deliberate cleverness, and former inclinations to meaningless fluency are effectively subdued. A

similar assurance obtains in 'Two Sketches for String Quartet.' The first, entitled 'By the Tarn,' published also for string orchestra, is a sombre fragment of introspective character. Its mood is effectively contrasted by the nimble writing and pleasing whimsicalities of the companion sketch, 'Jack o' Lantern.' Both these miniatures contribute memorably to the furtherance of Goossens' reputation as a writer of chamber music.

The orchestral prelude to 'Philip II' (Verhaeren) emphasises objective virility and the more dramatic features of Goossens' talents. Its exuberance has the spectacular polish of the composer's younger style reinforced by distinction of material. An echo of Stravinsky's 'L'Oiseau de Feu' is an incidental reminder of Goossens' former allegiance. The coincidence, however, is one chiefly of orchestral device, and does not distract seriously from the general worth of the prelude.

The piano works belonging to this phase hardly pretend to more than momentary interest. 'Kaleidoscope,' which also appears in an orchestral version, consists of twelve short descriptive pieces. Their character is sufficiently indicated in titles such as 'The Rocking-Horse' and 'The Punch and Judy Show.' Goossens is effective in this vein, even though the border-line between calculated amusement and unintentional triviality is not always clear. In the 'Four Conceits,' likewise available in orchestral form, he urges pianistic entertainment in terms rather similar to 'Kaleidoscope,' but obtains more even success by the use of firmer subject matter.

A substantial return to music of stable value is heralded by 'Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano.' The emotional range of its three movements is far reaching. In atmosphere this composition is by turns vigorous and rhapsodic. Goossens writes with a strength which demolishes effectively any suggestion that his powers are confined to the surface. He is at his best in the slow movement where a folk-song is taken as a basis for tranquil fantasy. At every point of the Sonata the instrumentation is finely commanded. For adequate performance expert musicianship is required; even so, the work merits more consistent attention than has been accorded hitherto.

By this time Goossens was becoming increasingly conscious that he had largely outgrown purely decorative resource. Possibilities offered by that method had been explored with a thoroughness which, on the whole, had served him well. The 'Violin Sonata' gives definite signs of awakening discontent with ornamental means and a fundamental search towards more significant values. Two orchestral works—'Tam O'Shanter' and 'The Eternal Rhythm'—bring the period of opulent expression practically to a close. 'Tam O'Shanter'

is a brilliantly written scherzo, full of glittering radiance, combining realised virtuosity with specific interest of material. An early concern with rhythmic devices which had attracted him in the music of foreign contemporaries had incited Goossens to a similar ingenuity in a number of somewhat imitative writings. In 'The Eternal Rhythm' he utilises previous knowledge to speak very much his own mind. This composition is a vital summary of artistic experience up to the moment combined with resolute promise of release from external influence. The next group of works shows Goossens in process of transition from youthful ornateness to the sophisticated classicism for which his mature utterances are known.

His 'Piano Quintet' (in one movement) and the 'Lyric Poem, for Violin and Orchestra' (or piano transcription), are refreshingly free from the gravest weaknesses to which compositions belonging to an intermediate phase are liable. Desire for experiment and adventure become considerably subordinated to the needs of more enduring thought. The combination of piano and strings forms a medium particularly suited to Goossens' abilities. His first-hand acquaintance with the nature of these instruments ensures technique of real distinction. Each component of the Quintet possesses a noteworthy independence contributing forcibly to the unity of ensemble. The composer still displays some conscious anxiety to avoid any risk of his pronouncements being described as conventional. This reluctance to favour compromise gives a certain harshness to his texture and a degree of restlessness to the general atmosphere. Such mild disadvantages find compensation in the vigour of Goossens' inventive capacity as in the unwavering resolve of his statement. A similar assurance is maintained in the 'Lyric Poem' where the address is reinforced by greater congruity of material. Goossens demonstrates with conviction his gift for poetic writing which, for its full emergence, demands chiefly a relinquishment of mannered contrivances. Here such opportunity is forthcoming. The music bears an easy grace and melodic spontaneity far removed from the abstract intellectualism responsible, in earlier works, for a tendency to coldness and inhumanity. Moreover no loss in value is experienced by this reasonable concession to the emotions. The gain is that Goossens now begins to reveal more of the personality hitherto partially overset by too calculated a brilliance.

So far the character of his piano works had been competent rather than distinguished. A welcome advance appeared in the three 'Nature Poems' entitled respectively 'Awakening,' 'Pastoral' and 'Bacchanal.' Each of these studies has solid merits commending it to pianists of more than moderate ability. The clear and purposeful writing is rarely obscured by excessive chromatic opulence.

'Awakening' and 'Bacchanal' obtain greater success than 'Pastoral' which, despite a fine opening, develops commonplace qualities in the middle section. In other and principal respects the composer's individuality is eloquently set forth. There is throughout these studies a formal strength giving urgent point to their themes. 'Hommage à Debussy,' a brief impression also belonging to this period, deserves mention not only for a sensitive realisation of the title but for well-defined characteristics of style and thought placing it much above the level of an ordinary 'pièce d'occasion.'

Hitherto Goossens' vocal compositions had been confined to a few songs belonging, for the most part, to a period when he was more concerned with the exploitation of novelty than with the presentation of notable findings. His search had met with some reward in 'Afternoon' (Westminster) and 'Tea-Time.' Both settings, to words by Jean-Aubry, are written with attractive skill and delicacy. An example of real strength is further to be found in the remorseless music of 'The Curse' (Barbor). Apart from these achievements there had been little to suggest that Goossens, in his treatment of the voice, was capable of something better than facile and pleasant invention. This view received emphatic contradiction with the advent of 'Silence: A Fragment' (Walter de la Mare), which up to the present remains the composer's single published work for chorus and orchestra.

Among new and unsuspected qualities 'Silence' makes clear that Goossens has an apt technique for dealing with mixed voices. He derives strength from the necessity to deny himself an extensive scale of treatment. The spirit of the words is caught with a subtlety revealing deep consideration of their import. It is this method which, if consistently followed, would qualify Goossens as a creative artist of uncommon distinction. Although, in the past, he has often missed that definition by his tendency to be fluently adequate there are increasing signs in the most recent compositions that he recognises the need for more permanent stress upon values such as those implicit in the present work. 'Silence' indicates, furthermore, that Goossens has a talent for choral writing chiefly demanding further exercise to prove commensurate with, or ultimately to surpass, abilities displayed in his chamber music. If the occasion for a great choral work is momentarily out of sight, it represents a future contingency well able to be met by the full application of the composer's powers.

The incidental music to Somerset Maugham's 'East of Suez' and, in later times, the song 'When Thou Art Dead,' from the dramatised version of Margaret Kennedy's *The Constant Nymph*, have brought to Goossens wide notice of a popular kind. His 'East of Suez' suite demands little comment except to say that, like all the composer's

undertakings, it is never less than competent and meets very suitably the demands of a special occasion. 'When Thou Art Dead' has stronger claims to satisfy more than the emotions of the moment. Its rather casual beauty may not suggest creative inspiration of profound origin, but there is a wistful charm about this song and a delicacy in its skilful address surpassing the average level of a vocal interpolation. Although critics are justified in saying that a composer of Sanger's alleged magnitude would surely have risen from his bed in a fury on hearing, albeit from a distance, the slipshod riot rehearsed in his honour, 'When Thou Art Dead,' if it failed to win his praise, might conceivably have stayed his wrath. To expect warmer approbation from that genius would be idle, for Sanger, by all accounts, was somewhat reluctant to welcome talent in music other than his own.

A return to achievement of more substantial pretensions than the 'East of Suez' suite is to be found in the 'Sinfonietta' for orchestra. Here Goossens' aim towards economical expression is finely realised. He writes with an alternation between sternness and classic elegance. Despite a feeling of harmonic austerity his material has an underlying richness shot with brilliant colours. Compact structure and concise thought give a firm value to the composer's intention. The 'Sinfonietta' confirms the opinion that Goossens is at his strongest when divorced from an exotic mood. He is concerned only with elements brooking no denial; and their presentation is fortified by technical workmanship of corresponding athleticism. Such paramount abstention from any form of aesthetic compromise repels listeners disinclined to exert themselves. Those mindful of their normal obligations will find in the 'Sinfonietta' sufficient evidence of beauty to compensate for a thoughtful approach.

Between the 'Sinfonietta' and the one act opera 'Judith' comes a group of smaller works with some claim to notice. 'Two Studies' for piano—'Folk-Song' and 'Scherzo'—are contrived with happy contrast. 'Folk-Song' develops chromatically from a simple and pleasing theme which, after passing through progressive stages of harmonic complexity, resumes its original character beneath a lovely descant in the closing bars. The attractions of this Study greatly increase on closer acquaintance with its somewhat harsh statements. 'Scherzo' follows an eminently pianistic design. Goossens' resources appear much to advantage in adroit writing of this nature. If he does not occupy himself greatly with importance of material he expresses what he has to say with an aptitude of more than ordinary distinction. There is a pictorial neatness in 'The Tug,' 'The Tramp' and 'The Liner' comprising a set of piano pieces collectively entitled

'Ships.' Each sketch achieves with deft point the characteristics of its theme; and affords opportunities to the executant effectively reinforcing the imagery of the subject matter. A corresponding ease of manner is discernible in 'Pastoral and Harlequinade,' for flute, oboe (or violin) and piano. The freshness of the music finds a welcome counterpart in the varied instrumental forces selected by Goossens. He grasps the possibilities of his medium with equal thoroughness in 'Two Ballades' for harp which are notable for intimate charm and graceful feeling wholly free from self-consciousness.

Although 'Judith' numbers among Goossens' less fortunate experiments it is interesting for precisely those features contributing to its partial failure as an opera. The composer seems to have approached Arnold Bennett's libretto in something of the spirit, though in nothing of the manner, controlling his attitude towards 'East of Suez.' The result is not so much an opera as a stage drama set to music. Goossens ignores, again and again, prodigious opportunities for the delineation of character. His share in 'Judith' makes agreeable hearing; but it rarely proceeds to carry out the true function of opera. One feels that the composer and the librettist are always at some distance from one another. The failure is on Goossens' side since it is, presumably, his business either to match the libretto or, if coalescence is impossible, to surrender his ambition. But even if Mr. Bennett had written a libretto to Goossens' music it is doubtful whether a closer approximation would have been achieved. Mr. Bennett is concerned with passionate elements; Goossens is not; and that is the end of the matter so far as unity or operatic success count for anything. The same artists are jointly responsible for a four-act opera, 'Don Juan,' not yet heard. It may be that this new work will show a mastery of the lessons whose importance was incompletely realised during the composition of 'Judith.'

The greatest promise of Goossens' ultimate significance exists in works of recent introduction. For some time past he has advanced towards the record of deeper and more satisfying experience. 'Three Greek Dances' for small orchestra demonstrate that his newly found means of address may be taken as a genuine development, not a momentary impulse. He confines himself here to an economy of instrumental forces. The choice is justified for its revelation of close-knit texture and orchestral assurance. Goossens' subject matter is apposite. A considerable tonal licence does not interfere with melodic certainty. In each Dance the themes are striking and well proportioned; and the composer shows no falling off of ability to provide

fine contrasts of colour without untoward luxuriance or hindrance to artistic control.

A stronger token of this musical progress is found in the 'Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra.' In several respects it is healthily divorced from characteristics formerly suggesting that Goossens was capable chiefly of a brilliant surface. Written in one movement the Concerto eschews the tradition of obvious display. The solo instrument, though granted a reasonable prominence, is closely related to an organic whole. Even in the cadenza there is no inclination towards unduly florid statement. This reconsidered interpretation of a concerto's purpose, as conventionally understood, obtains deserved success. By sparing emphasis upon the function of the soloist Goossens achieves an impression of dignity and balance infinitely more effective than insistence upon technical virtuosity. Although virtuosity, in its best meaning, is none the less required the executant's abilities are revealed through the medium of quiet workmanship which avoids any suspicion of calculated 'showing off.' The material of the Concerto is in keeping with this conception. Its course is marked by poetic, eloquent themes of moderate pace and gracious mood. The composition takes only a few minutes to perform, yet in that time Goossens presents an organised rhapsody of great charm. A brief but sprightly coda brings the Concerto to an end. The orchestral writing throughout possesses a restrained and thoughtful economy. Musical value is established almost as much by what Goossens determines to avoid as by the grateful features embodied in his design.

The 'Concertino for Double String Orchestra or String Octet' (in one movement) maintains less consistently a feeling of unified structure. Such disparity originates from a struggle between two elements which by nature appear to be irreconcilable. One aspect of the Concertino is preoccupied with a mood of polished sophistication; the other is concerned more with ingenuous reflections somewhat foreign to Goossens' real outlook. Each factor separately forms a reasonable basis for convincing development, but neither thrives in association with the other. Apart from this disability the Concertino is to be commended for material of sectional interest and for the masterly craftsmanship which is invariably at Goossens' command.

A landmark in the composer's recent development is the cycle of six songs from James Joyce's 'Chamber Music.' Goossens is exceptionally fortunate in selecting these words. They seem to expect a musical setting as their natural complement. In most instances the sensitive art of the poet enjoys a close response in the music. An eminent example is the fourth song, 'O cool is the valley now,' where

extreme simplicity is happily allied to conspicuous beauty. When Goossens determines upon ambitious treatment, as in 'Now, O now' which opens the cycle, his method has more conventional virtues. He never fails to provide something adequate, but what he offers compares unsatisfactorily with what he is certainly capable of offering. There is too much evidence of a promptitude to regard as final his first consideration of the poet's meaning. This shortcoming has historical importance because, in earlier days, it threatened seriously to prevent Goossens from ever developing into a composer of real note. Although he has mastered with increasing thoroughness the urgent temptations thus offered to an artist of his technical brilliancy, the fault is not yet wholly banished. For complete suppression it requires unceasing vigilance. There is, to some extent, a similar indication in the final song, 'I hear an army.' The style, belonging in essence to the period of the 'Three Nature Poems,' is characterised by a fluency more eager than enduring. Goossens is happier in the simpler writing of 'Gentle lady, do not sing sad songs,' which shows to remarkable advantage how exactly he is able to identify himself with Joyce's intention. An equal success distinguishes his finely illustrative treatment of 'All day I hear the noise of waters,' while the measured clarity of texture and felicitous melody in 'Dear heart, why will you use me so?' gives that setting a value above the ordinary. Each song in 'Chamber Music' can be described as effective. The significance of individual numbers depends upon the closeness or distance of Goossens' approach to the poet. His triumphs for the most part far outweigh occasional fluctuations. Moreover it is refreshing to find such scrupulous observance of verbal import as Goossens makes it his duty to maintain in these pages.

There remains the question whether the artistic development signified by 'Chamber Music' is likely to find consolidation in Goossens' future writings; whether, in short, we may now expect him permanently to set his face against all tendency to superficial attractions. 'Sonata No. 2 in C for Violin and Piano' offers testimony of the strongest kind that such a prospect may be awaited with confidence. This composition in three movements reveals grace and distinction at every point. Its workmanship has all the elegant polish which is Goossens' especial characteristic. There is added a depth of poetic meaning widely differentiating the Sonata from more spectacular but less considered trifles belonging to earlier days. Resources of a fine technique are brought to bear upon material in every sense worthy of exploitation. Architectural claims, satisfied in the delicate second movement, govern, with equal security, the larger scale to which the other two movements are proportioned. Goossens

is not afraid here to be lyrical. The resulting enchantment shows how capable is his address in that manner. An atonal feeling about the harmony is restrained sufficiently to advance, never to act against, the general interest. Throughout the Sonata Goossens obtains a strength and unity of notable degree. He establishes beyond denial that he has something of worth to communicate besides knowing how best to express his thought. So conspicuous an achievement raises expectations regarding further and memorable triumphs. Goossens has already demonstrated in abundant measure his possession of vital talents. If their exercise in pursuit of none but the highest ideals is made henceforth his active and unwavering concern it should be his reward eventually to rank high among the composers of our day.

R. H. HULL.

VIOLA POMPOSA AND VIOLONCELLO PICCOLO

WHENEVER we undertake research into the dim ages of the distant past we are not surprised if we meet with details which defy explanation; but, in the present enquiry, we do not propose to contend with times so remote, when we attempt to unravel a problem of the eighteenth century which has hitherto seemed insoluble.

During the past century and a half the viola pomposa, though closely associated with the name of the famous Leipzig cantor, has been a mystery instrument, and, although many suggestions have been offered and opinions stated, no satisfactory explanation has been as yet forthcoming. Of them all, however, the identification of the viola pomposa with the violoncello piccolo has claimed the wider support. It is for this reason, and on the strength of an arresting article in the December issue of the *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* by Mr. F. T. Arnold, we venture to reopen the question once more. We will approach it, too, from a new point of view, namely from indications given in compositions actually written for this particular instrument and, in conclusion, briefly indicate a comparison with the violoncello piccolo, which Bach very frequently includes in his scores and with which Dr. Sanford Terry will no doubt deal exhaustively in his new work on the instrumentation of the cantatas.

Before proceeding, however, to the extant music for the viola pomposa it will be useful to give a short *résumé* of the allusions made to it by writers in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, though it is owing to them that much of the confusion has arisen.

(1) *The Viola Pomposa in Literature*

To Dr. Kinsky of Cologne we are indebted for two very useful summaries of the literary notices of this viola and its associates; one of them he has given in the second volume (pp. 549 ff.) of the catalogue of the Heyer Collection of Musical Instruments—now at Leipzig University—and the other, brought up to date, in the March number of the *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* (pp. 325 ff.). He emphasises the fact that in books published during Bach's later years—such as Walther's *Musikalisches Lexicon* (1732), Majer's *Musicsaal* (1732 and 1741) and Eisel's *Musicus Autodidactus* (1738)—no mention is made of it; even Mizler's *Nekrolog* of the year 1754 passes it by. The first

details of the viola pomposa occur in Forkel's Musical Almanack for 1782, more than thirty years after Bach's death. In 1784 there is a statement by Hiller in his *Lebensbeschreibungen berühmter Musikgelehrten und Tonkünstler* that the celebrated Dresden artiste Pisendel at the Carnival in 1738 accompanied the violinist Benda on the viola pomposa; and there is also a note that the well-known instrument maker, Hoffmann, made several of these instruments 'to the design (*Angabe*) of Bach.' In 1790-2 Gerber issued his *Historisch-biographisches Lexicon* and (*s.v.* 'Bach') simply repeated Forkel's information, adding however that the date of the invention (*Erfindung*) was 'about the year 1724.' The substance of Forkel's description is as follows: 'In order to find a Mean (*i.e.*, between the Violin and Violoncello) and to avoid both extremes, the famous Kapellmeister, Herr Joh. Seb. Bach, invented (*erfand*) an instrument to which he gives the name Viola pomposa. The tuning is like that of the Violoncello but it has at the top one string more: it is somewhat larger than a Viola (*Bratsche*) and is fastened by a ribbon so that it can be held in front of the breast and on the arm.' Gerber's words are these: 'The heavy manner with which in his (Bach's) day the Violoncello was handled forced him, for the quick bass parts in his compositions, to the invention of his so-called Viola pomposa, which, something longer and higher than a Viola (*Bratsche*), in addition to the depth and four strings of the Violoncello had also a fifth "e" and was bound on the arm: this convenient instrument put the performer in the way of easily rendering the higher and rapid passages written.' Here we have the suggestion that it was identical with the violoncello piccolo.

Koch, in his *Musikalisches Lexikon* (1802), however, refers to the awkwardness caused by the size of the body, for which reason, he adds, 'the instrument has gone totally out of use for a long time.' But he proceeds to say that 'on the other hand there is still in use now and then a Viola, of the usual form and tuning, with the "e" string of the Violin added, which by some is also called the Violino pomposo.' This is evidently the instrument also mentioned by Petris (*Anleitung zur praktischen Musik*, 1782) and which Rühlmann in his *Geschichte der Bogeninstrumente* (1882) has confused with the viola pomposa. In his article in the *Zeitschrift* Dr. Kinsky gives an interesting reference to a composition for this violino pomposo.

Mendel in his *M.-Conversations Lexikon* (1870-89) treats the viola pomposa as a 'Bass Viola, tuned e¹ a d G C,' and later writers have either avoided the subject or taken for granted that the instrument was identical with the violoncello piccolo as, for instance, Curt Sachs in his *Real Lexikon* (1913) and *Handbuch der Musikinstrumenten-*

kunde (1920); whilst the editor of Riemann's *Musik Lexikon* (1929) boldly places the 'misleading Viola pomposa' under the heading 'Violoncello piccolo' and states that Bach's Sixth Violoncello Suite was really written for this unfortunate instrument, tuned as above.

As for Dr. Kinsky, in his Heyer Catalogue he appears to consider that an instrument of large viola-type—chiefly made by Hoffmann of Leipzig—of which specimens are to be found in the museums at Brussels, Leipzig and Eisenach, is the true viola pomposa; but in his *Zeitschrift* article he has gone over to the other camp and calls them violoncelli piccoli, similar to the 'Violon Cello Piccolo with 5 strings by J. C. Hoffmann, 1781,' which in 1773 was among the instruments of the Hofkapelle at Cöthen. Meanwhile M. Closson, the Curator of the Museum of the Royal Conservatoire de Musique at Brussels, has been experimenting with the large viola by Hoffmann in that collection (No. 1445, labelled by the late V. Mahillon as a viola pomposa).

The length of the vibrating string from bridge to nut is on this instrument $17\frac{3}{4}$ in. (45 cm.), the greatest depth of the ribs is 3 inches (75 mm.). On stringing and tuning it as a violoncello with an additional e^1 string he found it lost all sonority; on stringing and tuning it a whole octave higher (like the violino pomposo) he had the unpleasant experience of continually breaking the little e^2 string which, owing to the vibrating length, would not stand above e^2 , as was to be expected. He therefore considered that such a tuning as $a^1 d^1 g c F$ might be possible, but he observed that the bottom string, actually remaining on the instrument, gave no tone at F pitch.

His friend, M. Jadot—the talented viola player—pronounced also that the instrument could not have been held artistically on the arm (*a braccio*) owing to the depth of the ribs and the difficulty in shifting from the first position; he preferred playing it between the knees.

But Mr. Arnold, in his original paper, had propounded another riddle, for, as he truly said, if the lowest string was tuned to C or even to c (the octave higher), why, in the rare example of pomposa music which he has produced, is not this lowest note used by the composer where most expected and needed?

The answer, we believe, will be found and the mystery solved by the following analysis of the actual music still extant.

(2) *The Viola Pomposa in Composition*

Allusion has just been made to a work brought publicly to light by Mr. Arnold. To this we are now able to add two other compositions

for the instrument and as they are of earlier date they shall be described first.

Georg Philipp Telemann, one of the many famous *alumni* of Leipzig University, after holding important posts there and at Eisenach, found himself in 1721 Cantor of the Johanneum and Musical Director of the principal church at Hamburg. The following year he was elected Cantor at Leipzig, but refused the position, which Bach subsequently occupied. In 1728 he issued at Hamburg a collection of compositions on engraved plates entitled *Der getreue Music-Meister*. There is a copy of this rare work in the Library of the Conservatoire de Musique at Brussels and we are greatly indebted to the interest and kindness of the librarian, Dr. Ch. van den Borren, not only for details of the volume but for exact copies also of certain musical items therein contained, viz., two original compositions for the viola pomposa.

After a preface addressed to the 'Courteous Reader' there is an index and in it the following reference: 'Viola pomposa. Duetto a Viol. ò Flaut. trav. e Viol. pompos.—77, 84.' (Duet for viols (da gamba) or German flute and viola pomposa.) On turning to page 77 we find, as the Twentieth Lesson of the Music Master, a duet in G major for the 'Flauto traverso' and 'Viola pomposa ò Violino,' consisting of two movements—a *Dolce* (16 bars) and a *Scherzando* (28 bars), both in common time:—



On page 84 there is another duet, forming a continuance of the Twenty-first Lesson, consisting of a *Largo e misurato* in E minor (16 bars repeated) and a *Vivace e staccato* in G (90 bars repeated). It

will be noticed that in both duets the viola part is written in the ordinary treble G clef.

Flauto traverso e Viola pomposa 3 Violino Ein und Zwanzigste Lektion

Ex. 2. *Largo e misurato*

Vivace e staccato

It is evident, too, that these short pieces, unpretentious as they are, had proved acceptable to pupils, for the composer has noted at the commencement of each of them the keys in which they should be played, if other instruments are used than those for which they were originally written. Thus they can be rendered on a 'Fl. dol.' (flauto dolce or recorder) and a viola pomposa, but then in the key of E flat instead of G; or, if desired, they can be played an octave lower on two viols da gamba (without the viola pomposa) but in the key of A major. As an aid, too, for the recorder player the accidentals or their fingerings are considerably marked for the transposed part. We have tested Telemann's altered instrumentation, both on the recorder and on the viol da gamba, and find that the little duets are easily playable as he suggests.

The other composition is much more elaborate and for a copy of it we are indebted to Mr. Arnold, who obtained it from the librarian of the Bibliothek der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna, and gave many details of its form and scoring in his article for the *Zeitschrift* already mentioned. As this periodical, however, may not be easily accessible to English readers, we may here append a brief description. It is a 'Sonata a solo per la Pomposa col Basso' by 'Cristian Guiseppe Lidarti (di Vienna), Accademico Filarmonico di Bologna e Modena.' The date of Lidarti's birth is not at present known, but it seems to

have been about the year 1795 at Pisa. Mr. E. van der Straeten in his *History of the Violoncello* informs us that he was an accomplished performer on that instrument and Messrs. W. E. Hill are the possessors of a fine portrait in water colours of him. He published many of his works in England and there are MS. copies of his sonatas for flute, violin and violoncello in the British Museum (Add. MSS. 32316). The address given on them is 'in Pisa,' but he appears to have ended his days in Vienna. From the style of the Pomposa Sonata, which—especially in the rondo—is reminiscent of early Haydn, we think it was probably written about 1760 when, as Dr. Kinsky notes, the viola pomposa was still being made. The three-movement plan is adopted without repeats; an *Allegro maestoso* in E♭ (79 bars) is followed by an *Adagio* in C minor (31 bars) and finished by a cheerful rondo (114 bars), *Presto moderato* in E♭, closing *pianissimo*.



The viola pomposa part is here also written in the G clef and although the basso part on the lower line is not figured, it was evidently intended for use also on the harpsichord.

Now it is from these three compositions that we can deduce certain facts about the instrument itself. First of all, it was in existence before the year 1728; secondly, it was not a tenor or bass instrument, as suggested by many writers, but of alto or mezzo-soprano pitch; Telemann equates it with the violin, and the Lidarti Sonata would sound grotesque if played an octave lower, its double-stopping being quite out of place. We can therefore dismiss the e¹ a d G C tuning. But how was it tuned? Taking the whole three pieces, the highest

will be noticed that in both duets the viola part is written in the ordinary treble G clef.

Flauto traverso e Viola pomposa di Violino Ein und Zwanzigste Lesson

Ex. 1. *Largo e misurato*

Vivace e slacato

It is evident, too, that these short pieces, unpretentious as they are, had proved acceptable to pupils, for the composer has noted at the commencement of each of them the keys in which they should be played, if other instruments are used than those for which they were originally written. Thus they can be rendered on a 'Fl. dol.' (flauto dolce or recorder) and a viola pomposa, but then in the key of E flat instead of G; or, if desired, they can be played an octave lower on two viols da gamba (without the viola pomposa) but in the key of A major. As an aid, too, for the recorder player the accidentals or their fingerings are considerably marked for the transposed part. We have tested Telemann's altered instrumentation, both on the recorder and on the viol da gamba, and find that the little duets are easily playable as he suggests.

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note written is c^3 . It occurs in the following passage of Lidarti's first movement and here only :—

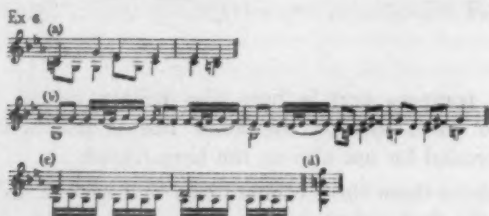


The high B_4 occurs in the same passage but not elsewhere in the sonata; in the duets it occurs once :—



High B_4 is found only in Lidarti, and, even there, only in 13 out of the 224 bars. High A is more frequent, G very general. Now, at the time these compositions were written, the third 'position' with the octave of the open string was considered the practical compass on the first string of the violin. Thus Bach as a rule takes his solo parts only to c^3 and Lidarti in his violin sonatas in the same way uses d^3 . We are therefore faced with the conclusion that the highest string of the viola pomposa was tuned, *not* to c^2 , but to c^3 , and followed in the shifts the usual practice of the time.

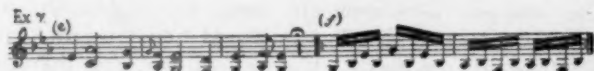
Moreover, both Telemann and Lidarti wrote double notes, the former in octaves and in a very simple way (see the *Vivace* of Duet No. 2), the latter in many elaborate stoppings and chords of which we give instances :—



From these it is evident that the third and fourth strings were tuned to d^1 and g ; in fact, Telemann's *Vivace* is largely built up on these open notes. And as the first string was tuned to c^2 and the third to d^1 , the second string would by a general rule be tuned to g^1 , as indeed, by a rendering of these compositions to this tuning, we

find it to have been. It will be remembered that in his Fifth Violoncello Suite Bach has adopted the tuning $g\ d\ G\ C$.

Now Telemann's parts for the viola pomposa being written also for the violin do not descend below g , but Lidarti takes his solo instrument down to f in the following passages :—



Dr. Kinsky therefore supposes that this was the lowest note on the instrument, and a recent writer on the viols (Mr. Gerald Hayes) has dismissed the viola pomposa with the remark, 'the customary statement that this instrument was a five-stringed alto Violin appears to be only a guess, unsupported by contemporary evidence.' We have therefore strung a viola to the following tuning, $c^2\ g^1\ c^1\ f$, in order to test whether there was a fifth string, notwithstanding the indications of the open g already given. Taking the passages (a) and (b), for instance (quoted above), we are convinced that, if they are to be played as written, the first is extremely difficult in the c^1 and f tuning and the second—especially on so large an instrument—impossible; there must certainly have been a fifth string.

To what note, then, was it tuned? We should perhaps say to c like the viola, but, as Mr. Arnold points out, if so, why did not Lidarti use a full c minor chord at the close (g) of his *Adagio*? And we may add, why, in the second passage (h) is the imitation suddenly broken when it might have been continued to the lowest c ?



It is clear, then, that the lowest string was not tuned to c , and it is most unlikely that it was tuned to f , a tone only below the fourth string. It was no doubt tuned to d , like the lowest string of the five-stringed alto viol, as given by Dr. Kinsky, and an octave above the viol da gamba.

The correct tuning, then, of the viola pomposa, as revealed in the music written for it, is $c^2\ g^1\ d^1\ g\ d$, which (except for the lowest

string) is exactly a fifth below the tuning of the five-stringed violon d'amour as given by Sachs in his *Lexikon*.

(3) *Some Conclusions and Suggestions*

To pass to two or three further points in connection with this interesting instrument: What form or 'model' did it take?

On the strength of statements made by eighteenth century writers we must assume that it was played 'on the arm' and not between or even on the knees. We are told, too, that the principal maker was J. C. Hoffmann of Leipzig. A large number of instruments, including lutes, viols, violins, violas, violoncellos (large and small), from the workshop of this famous *luthier* are still in existence, and amongst them these large five-stringed viola-shaped instruments already mentioned. The great difficulty in considering them as true examples of the viola pomposa has hitherto been the tuning, wrongly given as $e^1 a d G C$, or perhaps an octave higher. With the tuning we have now indicated ($c^2 g^1 d^1 g d$) this difficulty disappears, and, as we have tested its suitability on one of our own viols for the music actually written for it, we have every reason to believe that this large Hoffman viola is the genuine 'pomposa.'

We may perhaps remark, in passing, that the so-called specimen in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, is more probably an example of Hillmer's five-stringed violalin (c. 1800) or an experiment made by Vuillaume.

The true viola pomposa varies in total length from $29\frac{1}{2}$ in. to $31\frac{1}{2}$ in. (75 to 80 cm.), with a vibrating length from bridge to nut of $16\frac{3}{4}$ in. to $17\frac{3}{4}$ in. ($42\frac{1}{2}$ to 45 cm.) and a rib-depth of 8 in. to $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. ($7\frac{1}{2}$ to 9 cm.). The question, therefore, has been raised whether so large an instrument could have been played 'on the arm,' yet, as Dr. Kinsky informs us, the Fagottgeige, tuned an octave below the viola, was so played and an arm-violoncello is not unknown. But we should also recollect that, up to the middle of the eighteenth century and later still, these instruments, as other bowed instruments, were held really 'on the arm' and not 'under the chin,' the lower part of the player's face resting on the right (treble) side of the tail-piece instead of on the left side as now. In this way quite a large and deep model can be handled, even though we are not all Anaks or Hermann Ritters of vast proportions. Players, however, even in Bach's day, evidently found it awkward, and Koch, as we have seen, attributes the disappearance of the viola pomposa to this fact; but it could also be held 'in front of the breast'—to modern players a still more difficult undertaking. It is, however, quite possible to hold the instrument

securely, as our forefathers found, in this position with a ribbon across one of the lower corners and over the *right* shoulder, the right arm being left free for bowing. Constant shifting, too, is not required in the music written for it, and, when it is, the movement of the hand is prepared for by a rest or open string and a return to the first position rendered easy in a similar way.

As Mattheson (*Neu eröffnetes Orchester*, 1713) informs us that the early viols d'amore were strung with wire strings instead of gut strings for the bow, it seemed to us possible that the viola pomposa was also so strung, but not with 'sympathetic' strings; no trace, however, of this use of wire strings exists on the original portions of the Brussels specimen.

It has been noticed, no doubt, how strong a tradition there is that Bach invented the viola pomposa and also wrote for it. There is certainly no reason why he should not have suggested details to his friend and fellow citizen, Hoffmann; but the German word *Erfindung*, like our own 'invention,' may simply mean 'discovery' in the sense of bringing it before the public. If he really invented it 'about the year 1724,' soon after he came to reside in Leipzig, it is somewhat strange that Telemann, only three or four years later at the most, was publishing popular pieces for it; besides, the idea of a large viola was nothing very new. But did Bach actually write for it? Certainly, it has been said; it was the well-known violoncello piccolo of his scores. We have only to compare these original compositions for the viola pomposa with the great Master's *obbligati* for the violoncello piccolo to realise that they were two entirely different instruments. As we have said already, we do not intend to discuss the violoncello piccolo in detail at the moment, but whether it was a four-stringed instrument, as several of his scores seem to imply, with the tuning e^1 a d G, or whether it was a five-stringed instrument, similar to but smaller than the 'Violoncello à cinq cordes' of the Sixth Suite, the violoncello piccolo was a tenor or bass instrument, its highest range in the cantatas being only c^2 . In the accompanying illustration the relative sizes of the ordinary viola, the viola pomposa, the violoncello piccolo and the violoncello 'à cinq cordes' of Bach's day can be easily observed, the photographs (taken from actual specimens) being reduced to one scale.

If there is any truth underlying the tradition, either Bach's compositions for this viola are lost to us or, as we would suggest, the *obbligato* to the tenor aria in Cantata XVI (*Herr Gott dich loben wir*)

was written for it. According to Dr. Terry, this cantata was most probably composed for the New Year's Festival, 1724, agreeing in this respect with the presumed date of the 'invention.' An instrument (called a violetta) is used in this number as an alternative to the oboe da caccia, and the compass required (f to d²) is limited to a narrow range by that of the wind instrument. The name 'violetta' is of wide application. It has been given to the small alto viol da gamba and also to the ordinary viola or bratsche. Would it be very strange or incorrect if Bach—disdaining a more grandiose title—applied it to the viol-tuned viola pomposa? The original *obbligato* part is not written on the ordinary viola part of the same cantata, but on two separate sheets, one with the oboe da caccia and the other by itself, which seems to imply that a player was specially engaged for the part. It is the same in Cantata CLVII (*Ich lasse dich nicht*), written in 1727; neither in the recitative nor in the choral is a violetta part indicated in the score, but a separate violetta part is among the parts. The cantata numbers are taken from the Bachgesellschaft volumes.

In the only other cantata (*Preise dein Glücke*) in which the violetta occurs, composed in 1734, the part is written out on the ordinary viola part, being in unison with the violins; but the whole part is in a strange hand and not autograph. The term 'violetta,' however, is one which will repay more research than can be given here; we must leave it to Dr. Terry, who has kindly supplied many of the details just mentioned.

If, however, in this paper we have established the difference between the viola pomposa and the violoncello piccolo and have also rightly stated its tuning and pitch, our little excursion into one of the eighteenth century mazes will not have proved an idle quest.

1. VIOLA.
2. VIOLA POMPOSA.
3. VIOLONCELLO PICCOLO.
4. VIOLONCELLO 'A CINQ CORDES.'

Average Dimensions

	Total length		Bridge to nut		Greatest rib depth	
	inches	cm.	inches	cm.	inches	cm.
Viola pomposa ..	29½-30½	75-80	16½-17½	42½-45	3-3½	7½-9
Violoncello piccolo ..	39-41½	99-105	23-24½	58½-62	4-4½	10-12
Violoncello à cinq cordes	49	124	26½	67½	6	15½

NOTE.—A five-stringed specimen of the violoncello piccolo is in the Leipzig Collection and a violoncello à cinq cordes by Stradivari is dated 1684. The average 'bridge to nut' length of the ordinary viola is 15 in. (38½ cm.), and that of the violoncello is 27½ in. (69½ cm.).

F. W. GALPIN.



THE MUSIC OF TO-DAY

Mass production, chaos! Classical, romantic, modern, all jumbled together! The virtuoso, regarding art as a means of revealing his own brilliance, is the protagonist of the age. The use of the word 'interpretation' has become a test of criticism. But 'interpretation' to-day implies not a penetration into the work itself, but a knowledge of the reactions of the listener. Automatic success is the decisive factor, not concerted performance. Further, 'interpretation' means to-day 'doing violence' to something. Violence surprises; surprise startles the listener; reaps applause; the virtuoso has his triumph, and the circle is complete. Technique, too, has got the upper hand in music. We see a mechanical structure in place of organic growth; an arbitrary rendering instead of an exact presentation of content; an automatic nerve-jogging as a substitute for an enduring impression.

What does it matter to a Phidias or a Donatello that the eye of the beholder changes from century to century? Their works stand as living protests in bronze and marble against classicism, and every manifestation of the time-spirit. They stand as sentinels, outliving all the vicissitudes of shifting forms, whether these last long or only for a day. It is a matter of serene indifference to the Venus of Milo that men prefer now an Amenofis, now a Rodin, to her. But the poet and the composer are dependent on interpretation. It is a thousand pities that the gramophone was discovered several hundred years too late. Imagine Shakespeare and Goethe (actor and producer), or Bach (organist) and Beethoven (pianist and conductor), recorded on the gramophone! What a blow such documentary evidence would deal to the business of present-day virtuosi with their wealth of 'personal readings'! How our eyes would be opened to our wrong tempi, forced climaxes and impossible declamation! The composer's plain indications are not 'effective' enough to-day. Round *piano* and *forte* there has arisen a whole range of tone-grades; accuracy may demand a dozen *p*'s and *f*'s instead of one. Nor does the virtuoso consider tempo marks authoritative. He plays as it suits his style—at breakneck pace, or exasperatingly dragged, as the case may be. Exaggerated contrasts and distortions of tempo are the pet devices of our artists. Our ears are dulled and our nerves numbed by the din of to-day. And so we must have all these *pppppp* and *fffff*, *accelerandos*, *strettoes*,

fermatas, *ritenutos*, and the rest of them—crutches for the halt and the maimed. For, else, what would become of 'interpretation'?

What was it that enabled these past composers and their audiences to dispense with all our modern tricks? What did they seek and find in music, if they were never thrilled by the amazing pace of a Bach fugue or a startlingly sudden *ffff* in a Beethoven symphony? Can it really be true that they got any enjoyment out of music at all?

The whole explanation lies in this: Music was by nature the hobby of the aristocracy or of princes of the church. For us, art has become democratic. It is art that goes to the people instead of the people going to art. And so art must be made 'effective.' We make music for the pit and the gallery. The people crowd to the box office and the box office clerk is correspondingly obliging. Music is a business in which the concert agent has shares. The executant flatters the gallery—or goes. And so—'Forward, the crutches!'—up-to-date lighting, ferro-concrete to see, and ferro-concrete to hear, iron girders for the skyscrapers of art. Who will say that there is no progress and development, when statistics show that bad art is good business to-day, and that good art cost too much yesterday?

And yet, since we have no gramophone records of the past, and are convinced all the same that what we listen to to-day are only caricatures of masterpieces (a thing we undertake to prove) what is it that has gone by the board? Can it be a genuine perception of the building up, of the form, of a masterpiece? Is the case this—that we make use of all these coruscations because we can no longer extract any pleasure from the logical development, the building of phrase, the postponement of a cadence, the sweep and arch of a melodic line, the suspense of an *appoggiatura* and still less from the inner content of a piece? That would not be far from the truth.

'Antiquarianism!' someone will say. But is it really? How if a performance that gave value to the root principles of art were equally 'thrilling'? And how if such a presentation had a much deeper effect than all the noise of these performances upon those who have ears to hear? But where, alas, are these ears? 'It is reactionary to look for them' I hear someone say. 'What we want are new possibilities of effects.' By all means! But I would ask whether these virtuosi who bring full houses are a new idea. No! They are not even of yesterday, but of the day before. What we have on sale in our concert rooms is the pre-war popular taste. The whole business is dated 1900-1914: but we are in 1931.

When the Neanderthal Man first scratched pictures of his animals on rock and stone it was idle occupation, pastime, luxury. Only we,

who are accustomed to see in work the only point and happiness in life, despise idleness. Nature does not hurry: she takes her time; she germinates, grows, blossoms, and sleeps—sleeps half her life away. The man of to-day snatches a dull, heavy sleep. He needs sleep to make himself ready for more work as quickly as possible. He goes on working in his sleep, his dreams are visions of the day's impressions—rates of exchange, advertisement placards, hotel bars. The few who take their Sundays off to get into the country think of the cares of to-morrow; they have dashed out in a car to find rest, but they find restlessness. An atavism is deep in their blood, and they long to get back to nature and a purposeless existence, but are quite unable to give themselves up to it. Primæval man sat in the sun and scrawled figures in the sand, he was part of nature and felt happy in the passing hours. Out of this state of surrender to idle occupation art arose. Man sang in the country and that was the beginning of music. And music is the least purposeful of all the arts. Houses, clothes, and all other things have a purpose. But a man is as well protected in an ugly as in a beautiful house. He keeps warm if he has enough on, whether the clothes are shabby or fine. The element of beauty is something added to it all—luxury. Art was, is, and always will be luxury.

Of course, all great art is a servant; so is music: it serves the content by means of the form, and the form draws its vitality from the soul. Further, artistic work is indispensable; but work and constructive technique are unavailing if they do not build on content and form. How shall we define content and form?

Content is that vital emotion which conditions the work of art. Form is the logical manifestation of the content. As an illustration of content we may take this: When Beethoven was writing the 'Funeral March,' he understood, before even he wrote one bar, what grief for death means—something that is neither pain nor despair—and what the rhythmic pace of mourning humanity is. (Chopin took the existing form when he painted his picture of humanity moving in slow, grief-stricken pace, without creating a new one.) Mozart, again, knew, better than anything else, all the fine shades of happiness, and even his sorrow has the quick passing of a child's. Bach knew piety and deep awe in the face of death. In illustration of form: Analysis of a work of art never shows more than the mechanics of it—the design, not the form. One can dissect a fugue into its smallest constituents, and by inverting the process, if one knows the rules, write a fugue without a single mistake. But even if this fugue is a structure perfect to the smallest detail, it has no form, it is not a work of art. Consequently, though a Bach fugue is perfect in form, a fugue by

someone or other imitating a fugue of Bach's is, even if faultless, an insignificant trifle which any moderately gifted academy student could write. And this is because true form involves the logic of the content. To create form is to fix in the material an emotion that has been experienced, *i.e.*, content.

So it is difficult nowadays to talk of content, form and technical ability, because the significance of these words is obliterated. (No wonder, when the 'readings' of a work of art do not exhibit the realisation of these words.) People talk of content, thought, mood—of form, structure, design—of ability, technique, fluency—as if these words were synonymous; whereas the clear definition of them would be the very thing to help us to recognise the weakness of our period in the matter of art. In reality the concepts content, form, and technical ability, are inseparable. For instance, the critic who associates content with mechanical structure and technique simply does not understand the words he is using. But the real difficulty lies deeper. For analysis, form is comparable with structure and design, but for synthesis—and that is the important point—not; and that is the real cause of the confusion. No form exists without content. But structure has nothing to do with content. Structure is a matter of number and figure, and its nearest correlative is thought.

Content, form, technical ability and finished work of art together make a re-entrant circle: that is the secret. By way of pastime man gives form to his growing, dominant emotion; by this form, and out of endless attempts to express it, he acquires his ability; and this ability, so and not otherwise acquired, has one meaning only—the holding fast to the form in which the content is made manifest.

So the circle is complete and re-entrant—vital emotion, content, the groping for form, technical ability, perfected form, and the work of art (the expression of the vital emotion).

Hence the problem before the executant artist is, to live again in the work and re-experience it, to create it anew and share the inspiration of the composer. Is this problem ever solved; is it, in fact, ever even stated?

A man is a Beethoven exponent, a player of Mozart or of Chopin, a Bach specialist, for specialisation is rampant in music too. The natural reason would be that the practitioner necessarily penetrates into those works in which he 'travels.' But there are other possible reasons, and these are actual to-day. The 'traveller' in him finds it very instructive to notice, over a course of years, what sort of performance interests the public, and when he conducts Beethoven's 'Fifth' for the hundred and seventy-fifth time he has a pretty good idea of what the public wants. He knows that the bridge passage

from the scherzo to the last movement must be so soft that half the audience cannot hear the music at all, that an almost imperceptible *rallentando* creates an effect of oppressive suspense, and that the *crescendo* on the last beat and the sudden forte of the last bar must present an extreme of dynamic climax. And so he achieves his object—bewildered astonishment. Ah! if that were only all! But it is not. The conductor must also visibly give the audience their cue, like a policeman directing the traffic. He makes passes with his left hand and bends his knees to indicate a *pp* (a practically inaudible *pp*, as we said). He straightens himself out for a *crescendo*, lunges into space with his arms, and brandishes the stick like a rapier when he reaches the *fffff*. This is living in the world of art; visible, bodily living in it! And what does he live in? Its content? Its form? Not at all! He lives in the effect it makes on the public. No more, and no less than that.

I remember how Felix Mottl used to conduct this passage in the 'Fifth'; and I remember how the conductors of an age that had the happiness of being the first to know the works of Wagner, Bruckner and Brahms—people who knew that the work comes first—used to make music; and I remember how we, the younger generation of those days, got our enjoyment of the classics without all these catchpenny tricks.

Some of those performances might perhaps seem over-romantic to-day, a little old-fashioned. I admit it willingly; that generation had its artistic failings, too. I am not the one to protest against the changes of time and age, but the performances of that age were of a standard that makes one protest, thinking back on them, against changes for the worse.

If only we could free ourselves from the failings of our predecessors and yet retain their understanding and conception of the work! If when we wished to interpret differently a passage that appeared to us in a different light we could maintain a greater precision of tempi, a greater attention to melodic line and real clarity of tone, now that technical difficulties, I mean actual manual difficulties, are practically overcome!

And in the midst of all this a marvel is seen. This age, which stands vacillating on the brink of a virtuosity that ruins everything, suddenly produces a living proof of all I have said about inspiration and form. This living proof is Toscanini. The performance of this unique personality amounts to a gigantic protest against every kind of 'personal interpretation.' Toscanini has nothing whatever to do with the desire for effect, with forced structure or virtuoso brilliance of any kind. He stands alone and single-minded in the service of the work of art he is performing. He is a *memento mori* to the art of

to-day. Think of his performance of the 'Eroica.' Here we notice tempi steadily maintained, unflinching clarity of all detail, not at the price of the unity of the whole, but deep within the form created, and made by Beethoven self-sufficing; no dynamic exaggerations, no rubatos. And the final result is that the form of the work is created anew out of experience of its content.

This inspired musician is a reactionary; he belongs less to his own day than any now alive. He is a reactionary because he reveals to us the living values of the past without any extraneous decoration, and he does not belong to this day or that because he proves that form, when it has outlived all the accidents of time and place and presentation, can still clothe the content with a conviction upon which time has no effect; for there is a timelessness which has nothing to do with the date of the success. And so his art, revealing as it does the continuity of thought and culture—without which we should be lost—is a challenge to the musical world of to-day, a challenge not only to executant but also to creative artists.

The attitude we adopt towards Toscanini is a matter of disposition and of conscience. But is that the way we take it? No! We acclaim this true artist, one day; and the next, startled by the impression we received, criticise him grudgingly, in order to reinstate our own demigods. We praise Toscanini's orchestra, shrug our shoulders, and remark that he can get unlimited rehearsals. As if anyone else could do with a thousand rehearsals what this man of true intuition does in a hundred! The critics talk of failure in ecstasy, of the touch of the schoolmaster, and so on. And why? In order to distract attention from the slump in the art-industry, to cover up the fact that music has now got on to the list of the unemployed, to veil his supreme greatness which is rightly felt to be a menace to the supermen among our artistic pigmies, because it is intolerable to have to confess our spiritual bankruptcy. The caricatures are mounted again on the signboards, because a caricature is the true mirror of the age. And this presumptuous man, who dares to possess his own soul, can chastise the age without needing to speak a word.

And yet . . . Is Toscanini anything but a *fata morgana*? Will his art exercise an enduring influence? This is his limitation, and that must be discussed elsewhere, since it throws a strong light on the limitations of the musician of to-day.

'Rococo! I like it,' says someone; 'what does it matter to me if the authorities anathematise ornament. Rococo is just what I like.'

I see Mozart smiling as he notes down his trills and florid figuration; form is to him so utterly natural and self-explanatory that he kicks

out like a young colt in his strength and can't help taking his coloratura right up to F in alt. Susanna quite agrees. Of course she loves 'Figaro'; but all the same the Count is a fine gentleman, and she finds no difficulty in being on good terms with him. And then, the old seigneurial right is now abolished; there is no compulsion on her to 'oblige' him on her wedding night. But she is sorry for the Countess. As for the Count, his attitude is charming! Waive the right? What folly! But—with a shrug—we have read our Voltaire and Rousseau and Beaumarchais, and, on the whole . . . well, haven't we ourselves in the irresponsibility of youth broken away from the traditions of family and society? 'There have been many *mésalliances* in our class,' he reminds himself, 'and even the Countess . . . God, how charming she was! But, naturally, *la femme de trente ans* . . .' What a pity it is that women bloom and fade so quickly.'

The Count knows what a twinge of jealousy is. But the gallant adventures of a Count are a different thing from the infidelities of a married woman. So it would be ludicrous to think more of it, provided the forms are observed: and the forms *are* observed.

Has one not a perfect right to prosecute these charming little affairs that adorn life—intrigues, they call them? All they do is to underline style, here and there. Of course, we can't get on without a little coloratura occasionally. For what on earth is a man to do when his heart laughs within him? Only, there must be no mistakes, if we lose the toss. For then . . . then . . . Well, a new day is dawning, alas; no more driving a four-in-hand through the rules. We must give way an inch or two: we don't want any scandals. Down on your knees, and say, 'Angel, forgive me!' But we are rococo men, all of us. We'll dance and laugh at the charming Susanna's wedding, because . . . well, because one is a gentleman and keeps a promise.

Grace and synthesis were the strength of the eighteenth century, precision and analysis are the characteristics of the late nineteenth and so far of the twentieth century. We break up an organic whole into the tiniest fragments. We divide up the universe, dissect the microcosm under the microscope and make telescopes to explore the macrocosm. It is small wonder that we come to treat art in the same way. We analyse harmony and counterpoint and come in the end to the system itself; the next stage is to place the system under discussion. And why stick to tonality, to consonance and dissonance? Is form itself bound up with these elements? Who can say? People

talk of sound waves and their relations, but the deductions from such reasoning are precarious.

Construction holds the field, and the twelve-note system is the upshot—a mathematical concept rich in possibilities. But the old system, too, was the result of consciously speculative theory. So far, so good. That is a great work accomplished, and one must appreciate it as such. It is a good thing that we have emerged from the romantic age of decadence with its flourish of phrase. But with form it is different. No matter how much the theorist may construct, form will not be the outcome. Rational logic of method alone will never beget beauty. A canon, fugue, or sonata written in the twelve-note system may be correct enough, but it is not on that account a thing of form. That does not mean that form will never exist in the twelve-note system. It may be that this analysis is a preliminary labour; time will show. It all depends on what wine is poured into the new glasses, and whether the material of which the new glasses are fashioned can hold its own by the side of the pure crystal of the old tonal system. The future will answer all these questions for us.

We have to-day lyrics of the suburb and of the city, music of the middle classes and of the artisan, and we are experimenting in the music of machines. In spite of it all we have no real musical art, because we have no form. If you teach a servant girl of to-day to sing coloratura, she will never be a Susanna; if she dances foxtrots in the ballroom she remains what she is by nature—commonplace and boring; see her in love, and she is still civilised, sentimental, opinionated. Sensual, yes, but never passionate!

I am thinking of the stormy night in Shakespeare's *Lear*—not of Mendelssohn's 'Walpurgisnacht'—when I say we must go 'Back to Nature.' You can overcome everything except nature. You can eliminate everything from art except form—'Nothing will come of nothing.'

PAUL V. KLENAU.
tr. A. H. F. S.

OLYMPIC MUSIC

SOME weeks ago in the columns of *The Times*, we were urged by Sir Harold Bowden to 'think Olympically' about sport; to put in plain words his message, it was that we should never produce Olympic Games champions on our present hugger-mugger, unco-ordinated system of being 'fond of athletics.' The best in every kind must be sought out, trained, segregated if need be, lest the 'rabbits' infect the 'tigers' with their congenital rabbitness of temperament, and launched carefully upon the international world of sport. A few desultory letters supported this view, but a severe set-back was administered by a letter from a sterling Olympic athlete, Mr. Gerald Abrahams, who manfully defended our lack of system, and maintained—as we think with great truth—that if you cut out the 'local patriotism' effect of playing for your club or your town or county, you will inevitably stifle what is really best in athletics, and there will soon be none at all, and our England will perhaps consist of nothing but potential champions who lack any club or any organisation in which to gain their merit and show their potential 'tigerism.'

This correspondence contrasted very clearly the points of view of the enthusiastic organiser of champions and the man who is himself a 'person who is fond of athletics.' (Mr. Abrahams must excuse us if we treat him as a tiger who is not too tigerish to consort occasionally with, or at least to understand the mentality of, the average rabbit.)

There is a curious parallel in the present-day world of music which is at present largely governed by the majestic activities of the British Broadcasting Corporation, hereinafter referred to, as lawyers say, as the B.B.C. It has been admitted by them, whether in print or not we cannot at this moment verify, that the present B.B.C. orchestra was founded because there were very much finer orchestras in Europe and America than we can afford to have in England, and seeing that no private benefactor appeared to act as Maecenas, the B.B.C. (having a charter and being therefore sufficiently *editus regibus*) stepped into the breach and collected their orchestra, of which they may justly say that it can compare with any European or American orchestra. In fact they have created an Olympic Champion.

Now in this world of actions and reactions it is not without peril that you cast any stone into the water; the ripples spread out and all

is still, but you may have interfered with a current or tideway and the channel will silt up, or the current will eat out all the bank opposite.

This article is not written to twist the tail of the B.B.C., for it is ignoble to approach any animal from behind, but we would rather stroke its head and whisper in its ear and perhaps ultimately take some thorns out of its paws, and then we could walk arm in arm, like the Lion and the Unicorn, round England's green and pleasant land in the manner of enquiring travellers in a foreign country.

The first thing of which we should be conscious is that music to the average Briton implies something that makes use of singers, and consequently for every instrumental unit we shall find about ten, or twenty even, choral units. Sometimes these will combine in choral concerts accompanied by orchestras, sometimes they are not combinable, as in the case of madrigal societies and brass bands. The next point is that they are amateur affairs. The chorus are volunteers and have had no professional musical training, the orchestra are mixed, amateurs with some musical training, and professionals with varied amounts of experience, while the conductor stands between them sometimes as an amateur of more than usual competence, sometimes a professional with a very considerable degree of skill and experience. These represent the higher class of musical effort, societies with many years of traditions behind them, rooted in the good Victorian past of the 'eighties. Below them in size come the village and small town choirs which are the mainstay and the product of the competition festival movement. These are smaller forces altogether, numbering as few as twenty, very much the amateur who has had no training whatever, taught by one of their own number whose courage is great enough to stand up as teacher. Sometimes a village is lucky enough to have a really gifted musician in its neighbourhood, and occasionally the organist of a small town lends his aid to the town choir. These are exceptions to the general rule. Below these again, in size, are the numerous choral classes in women's institutes, which do not use mixed voices.

Before the war, when life in town and villages was very much what it had been for the preceding thirty years, these choral classes in the winter months supplied something unique in the lives of the singers. To tell this story fully would be to write the history of the competition festival movement. Choral music is undoubtedly the characteristic feature of English music, and its widespread ramifications into every village in England are a legitimate source of pride to everyone who

really knows English music, and the genuine capacity for our people to take pleasure in singing.

Times have changed. It is the general experience of all musicians in this country that it is more difficult to get young people to join choral classes than it ever was before. There are other amusements, other activities, other experiences before the young. Choral singing is having a hard time. We who believe in it think that it will not perish altogether from the earth, but we know from experience that when a choral society disappears, it is uncommonly hard to plant another in its place.

This is history and fact. It is also history and fact that the employment of professional musicians will be in direct ratio to the numbers and enthusiasms of the amateurs. When the amateurs fade away the professionals find their living gone.

Now let us turn from history to parable. 'Behold there was a sower went out to sow.' Some of the seed, in fact most of the seed, appeared to be wasted. Some the birds ate, some fell where it could not make a lasting crop, some where it could not grow at all, but 'other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased, and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.' Like all parables, this admits of several explanations or analogies. We must imagine that the seed was equally good throughout, and plainly therefore the seed is not to blame for falling where it did. Equally naturally the terrain of the owner is varied; wayside cannot be blamed for being wayside, stones for being stones, nor is it fair to praise good ground for being good ground. There are the inequalities of gifts. The responsible person (if any) is the sower. But how is he to ensure a good crop unless he sows liberally enough to allow for wastage? Is not there an analogy with the prodigality and the wastage of nature? Every tree and flower, every 'uncultivated' creature, produces more potential descendants than the world has room for and the wastage is colossal, and only some survive. Eliminate the wastage and you may eliminate very soon the species itself. Is it unreasonable to press this analogy to the present situation in music in this country? We want to have the best, to have the cream collected in one place, namely, the B.B.C. orchestra in London. But unless the sources are carefully tended the supply will fall short, for there is no cream without milk. The great bulk of music-lovers and amateurs who perform are the milk, the professionals are the cream.

Seriously, the B.B.C. must consider well how they can help music in the country in the widest sense, as well as how they can collect the finest orchestra that we can produce. They must consider the rock

whence all this music was hewn, and the pit from whence it was digged. In other words, they must be at great pains to help provincial music by frequent broadcasts of choral performances, even at the expense of their studio hours; their regional directors must be charged with the urgent duty of caring for every musical activity in their region, and of coming to their rescue wherever possible. Similarly, it is our duty, on our side, to communicate our difficulties with the greatest candour to the B.B.C. and to search jointly for a solution of our joint problems. Surely we are not begging any question by saying that it is a 'joint problem.' The B.B.C. has greater resources financially than any other musical body we ever dreamed of. It is a Maecenas who can play Queen Elizabeth, Ludwig of Bavaria, Caracalla and Nero all rolled into one—the greatest potential power for good that has appeared in our times. If occasionally it reminds us of Nero more than Maecenas, do not let us lose patience with it; to-morrow it may be Ludwig. But above all things let us learn to think parochially occasionally, and let Olympic rivalries pass away. The Americans who are really interested in the future of music in their country are even now afoot with a scheme to build up just this great organisation of choral music which we are letting slip away from us. The Czechs and Germans would like to have some of our mixed voice choirs to play with. And all the time we are letting our music die by inches in the vain endeavour to make a good display for the foreigner in London. It is as sensible as if we were to attempt to reproduce in Hyde Park the view from the Malvern Hills or Cadgwith Cove at the Round Pond. We ought to be proud of having our national music where the nation has got it, not where it is most convenient for visitors to see it and for London critics to write about it. (In this connection we might observe that before the war it was very rare for London papers to send their music critics into the provinces unless it were for the Three Choir, or other similar, festivals. Now it is common.)

The difficulties that are presented to the B.B.C. in respect of broadcasting provincial concerts are probably numerous, but mostly technical questions of engineering. It is worth noting that as these lines are being written (August 27) there appears a letter in *The Times* from Professor Henry Armstrong, in which these words appear: 'The engineer has a very narrow outlook: he will construct anything given a fair lead.' We feel rather strongly that the engineers of the B.B.C. are allowed to lead policy rather than be compelled to follow it. It will be a major disaster if it is found to be so much easier to broadcast from a special studio that 'outside broadcasts' become rarer. The general opinion of regular listeners

(of whom the present writer is not one) appears to be that broadcasts from actual performances are so much more 'alive' than studio broadcasts. If this be true, it should be another incentive to the B.B.C. to set their engineers to the task of making universal outside broadcasting their future care. They should carefully consider if the contentions here raised are not correct, namely, that you cannot have cream without milk, and that for each really good orchestral player you must have a background of many inferior players, and that if the nation's music be upheld there will be plenty and to spare for the capital itself, but that the converse of this proposition is not true.

We have said that the B.B.C. have had large financial resources. Perhaps they feel themselves that this *has* been true but is not now true, and may be very much less true in a short time. But at any rate they have always had a boundless wealth in advice from outside, not always couched in the most genial or helpful terms. Whether this article comes to their eyes or no, is immaterial. Its purpose is rather to help performing musicians to see how they can put their case for help to the B.B.C., to show them a future line of policy when everything seems very dark, and finally to encourage them to regard the B.B.C. as a dragon which, when tamed, will be an excellent animal to have in the house, and to the heading of this article should be added, perhaps, 'Hints on Dragon-Taming.'

STUART WILSON.

THE ASSOCIATED BOARD'S EDITION OF BACH'S 'FORTY-EIGHT'

THIS edition, in two volumes, was first published in 1924, and has often been reprinted; the companion edition of Beethoven's sonatas—companion in the sense that the commentator on Beethoven, as on Bach, is Professor Donald Tovey—has just been completed by the appearance of its third volume a few weeks ago. With permission, I hope to discuss this in the next issue of *MUSIC AND LETTERS*; and I should wish that the present article to be taken as two instalments of a single survey, dealing as they will, in the main, with the work of one editor.

The title-page of the Bach volumes says 'edited by Donald Francis Tovey, fingered by Harold Samuel,' with a supplementary mention of an 'Editorial Committee' of four; a brief introductory note, signed by the other two, Sir Hugh Allen and Professor Percy Buck, speaks of the 'enlistment of the services of Professor Donald Tovey, particularly as regards the text, and those of Mr. Harold Samuel with regard only to the fingering.' There are ten pages of preface ('The text,' 'Principles of interpretation,' 'Notation'), initialed by Professor Tovey; four more ('General instructions for the use of this edition') bear no signature, but the literary style is obviously the same. The commentaries on each individual prelude and fugue are, naturally, his. In one instance—the F minor (Book I) fugue—



the commentary 'the mordent given by one of Bach's pupils to the penultimate note of the Subject stands for a well-understood trill, perhaps with turn, and it should be played wherever technically possible' is supplemented by an italicised footnote (the only one so distinguished throughout the two volumes)—

If the trill is adopted at all. But, though conventionally correct, it interferes with breadth of interpretation on the pianoforte.

—which seems rather confusing.

Everything Professor Tovey writes shows a remarkable combination of the qualities of the idealistic musician, the encyclopædic scholar,

and the skilled executant and teacher. It may be that occasionally in these two volumes he too flatteringly assumes that all his readers will be able to keep in step with his own learning: the teacher (if not, always, the immature player) may be assisted by being told that the F sharp minor (Book II) prelude should be about the same *tempo* as the thirteenth of the Goldberg variations but quicker than the twenty-fifth, or that the A flat (Book II) prelude should be 'a shade faster than the Sarabande of the C minor Partita,' but comparatively few of the readers of the commentaries on the G minor fugue or A minor prelude in the same book will be likely to have at their elbows Weingartner's treatise on the conducting of Beethoven's symphonies or the fifteenth volume of the Bach-Gesellschaft cantata-scores—and, unless they have, they will not fully understand Professor Tovey's points. But on questions of text scholarship is naturally paramount; and the preface puts these in the first place.

Discussing the problem of various readings, Professor Tovey writes:—

The capacity thus to discriminate must not be regarded as a matter of taste; it is solid scientific knowledge; attainable, indeed, by nobody who lacks enthusiasm for Bach's Church Cantatas, but of just the same order of scholarship as that which restores a lost consonant throughout the whole extent of the Homeric poems, and detects later interpolations by the fact that they show that they were written after that consonant was obsolete.

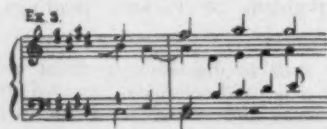
The analogy is not really exact; the digamma is (to put the case mildly) a more limited and more readily definable subject than the style of a great composer. But what is meant, and most rightly, is that the 'matter of taste' is not one of mere taste and fancy, but of the taste of the skilled musical scholar. Indeed, Professor Tovey is far from being a dogmatist. Certain textual things are impossible, and that is that; but there remains a large field open to scholarly debate.

'What is claimed,' he writes, 'is that the readings here adopted have in all cases undoubtedly been at some time approved by Bach himself, and are in most cases probably his last readings. An autograph is not always superior, on such points, to the copy of a pupil or a son-in-law.' But each individual reading is judged entirely on its own merits; the balance between autographs and copies swings this way or that, according to his most interestingly argued views of the necessity of the case. Sometimes he prints small-type alternatives in the text (inadvertently, in bar 40 of the G sharp minor (Book II) prelude, without explaining what is what), and leaves the player quite free to choose for himself; but, as a general rule, he comes to a

definite conclusion and gives his reasons. And these reasons may have bases extending considerably beyond the reading actually in question; for example, he points out that the chord



near the end of the D major (Book I) prelude, though its sound is in itself fine and it is sanctioned by four autographs, fits less well into the general harmonic progression of the succeeding bars than the plain diminished seventh (B in the bass) given by pupils' copies. He does not hesitate (A major and B minor, Book I, fugues) to take advantage of the increased upward compass of the keyboard; nor, in the E major, Book II, fugue (bars 37-8)—



to suggest that the music is much improved and structurally clarified if the tenor low E and D sharp are taken an octave higher—such stretches being impossible for an instrument lacking a damper pedal; nor (D minor, Book I, fugue: G sharp minor, Book II, prelude) to print something for which there is no authority at all except the requirements of sense and parallelism. But for 'uniformitarianism,' as such, he has no use; it is often, he points out, the distinguishing sign of an inferior variant. Fairly frequently, as he illustrates most suggestively, different readings necessitate differences of pace; quicker note-values involve slower *tempi*, as also, it may be only momentarily, do the beautiful 'false relations' of the F sharp minor (Book II) prelude or the G major (Book II) fugue, though the latter variant he relegates to small type—why, is not obvious, as he commends it as 'of high authority and possibly a late improvement.'

'Principles of interpretation,' in the fittingly broad sense of the words, are the theme of more than half the preface; and what is here laid down in outline is illustrated in minute detail in the commentaries on the individual preludes and fugues. Every now and then, some of us may perhaps feel, minor matters are stressed overmuch—for example, the advisability of singing Bach's themes in order to realise their just phrasing. But about the superlative quality of ninety-nine-hundredths of this great mass of work there can be no two opinions; it is here, above all, that this edition stands pre-

eminent. Not, indeed, that the finest things are quotable at all, except at length and word for word; the musicianship is packed much too tight—though every now and then it bubbles over in a phrase of engagingly felicitous humour. Many a reader, we may be quite sure, will feel that it is revealed to him, as by a lightning-flash, that he has played the end of the E major (Book II) fugue as if he were quoting 'Rule, Britannia,' or the beginning of the C sharp major (Book I) prelude as if the music were braying rather than dancing; that his staccato has been 'elegant and hen-like'; that he has never realised the artistic necessity of being able to 'roll along in high spirits, with a disposition to loll but never to drag.' And when these kindly barbs have spurred him to attend—well, he will find plenty of matter for reflection that will last him all his musical days.

Professor Tovey does not believe in making things too easy for those who wish to know their Bach. He leaves the original text in all its starkness except for the addition of a tempo-suggestion (in brackets) at the head of each prelude and fugue. And for this he apologises, as a concession to those who may be studying separate numbers for examination purposes; teacher and pupil ought really, he urges, to supply them for themselves, on the basis of the principles laid down in preface and commentaries. Similarly with expression; flexible variety of rhythm and tone is as desirable in Bach as in Chopin, but it should not be pedantically prescribed; within considerable limits, there are many ways of going equally right; personal thought is vital, and he will be quite happy if—having made perfectly sure that we understand him—we decide, on reflection, to differ.

About ornaments, again, he has no use for cut-and-dried methods.⁽¹⁾ Bach's style is, he points out, too big a thing to be measured by the rules of contemporary text-books; and an over-specialised scholarship may easily become unmusical. An ornament is a secondary decoration of a primary essential, not a fixed quantity in itself; we must interpret each one as it comes, in the light of its melodic and harmonic context, and not stabilise by a rigid notation what is naturally unprecise. The performer is helped towards decision, but without dogmatism; equally tenable alternatives are often suggested, and the problem left at that.

Professor Tovey's pages are indeed notably sane. We are sensible, all through, as an undercurrent, of his profound affection for the music he knows so well; but there is never one word of sentimentalism. Every now and then he may give us an artistic appreciation

(1) Couperin's distinguishing sign for the Mordent is adopted, with very great advantage; ordinarily, Mordent and Pralltriller are well-nigh indistinguishable except by eyes of more than average keenness.

of a point we might easily fail to realise—for example, he calls our attention to the countersubject in the B major (Book II) fugue as 'one of the harmonically richest and most original Bach ever wrote'; normally, he guides us up to the threshold, and then leaves us to ourselves. With all the extreme subtlety and sensitiveness of his musicianship, he is never fanciful; except with the B major (Book I) prelude and fugue, he is refreshingly contemptuous of attempts to prove thematic transferences ('wasting time in the search for things that are not there, with the resulting tendency to dwell upon accidents that might seem to warrant the search'), or forecasts of later art-forms. No one could be more minutely careful about the smallest details; but he is insistent that we should remember that 'the architecture is more important than the bricks,' and that, provided that we phrase broadly and not 'as if we were giving a lesson in grammar,' we can build pretty much on our own lines. And a pseudo-antiquarianism is as little to his taste as a pseudo-academicism. He very often refers appreciatively to clavichord and harpsichord, and the effects producible only by such means; but he shares Bach's own healthy broadmindedness about what is spirit and what is letter, and makes no attempt to pretend that we are not living in the world of to-day.

Just occasionally, a little hastiness in verbal expression produces for the moment a slight obscurity in the thought; but it does us no harm to be prevented from reading too quickly, to be obliged to think for ourselves, in this as in other matters. Twice, however, I confess to have been baffled. What exactly does Professor Tovey mean in saying, with reference to the F minor (Book I) fugue, this—

As nobody will read this Fugue convincingly at sight unless he can play the *Meistersinger Vorspiel* or Beethoven's last quartets fluently from score, nothing is to be gained by putting such counterpoint on two staves with any regard to a relation between staves and hands.

As to the second half of this sentence, certainly; but is not the first half an unhelpful exaggeration? The eye of any sight-reader, good or bad, focusses two lines more readily than twice two, or twelve times two. And, about these bars in the E flat major (Book II) fugue—



Professor Tovey writes:—

Another difficulty, very rare in Bach, . . . is the stretch in bar 22, which was far more risky on his instruments than on ours.

Here the tied note should be repeated, even by hands large enough not only to stretch the ninth, but to approach it without squirming; and, of course, pedal must be used.

But why should a player who may possess a comfortable ninth or tenth stretch not be allowed to perform the music as written, without spoiling the rhythm of the bass by repeating the tied B flat? The tone holds perfectly well; and there is really no analogy between such a case as this and, say, the end of the C sharp minor (Book I) fugue, where (as indeed not so infrequently up and down the two books) it may be advisable, on instruments whose tone is likely to collapse, unobtrusively to repeat a long note somewhere or other—Professor Tovey gives in his commentaries some very useful alternative suggestions for so doing.

On this necessity for subtle tone-balancing in order to secure the clearness of Bach's harmonic texture throughout all its piecemeal shifting Professor Tovey is, rightly, most insistent. (Brahms, according to the reminiscences by his pupil Florence May of his teaching and playing of Bach, made this a primary and fundamental point; incidentally he was, also, a strong believer in rhythmically and tonally coloured performances.) His suggestions are often most luminous and helpful; but it is rather a pity that on perhaps the most awkward problem of this type in all the forty-eight—the alternating overlappings of the dissonances in the F. sharp minor (Book I) fugue—he, for once in a way, over-generalises.

One or two misprints catch the eye. Any student will probably realise that an F sharp has dropped out of the middle voice of the thirty-ninth bar of the B minor (Book II) fugue; he certainly ought, on reading that 'the mordent in bar 2 (C minor fugue, Book II) is an ordinary cadential trill,' to be able to supply, on the correct note, its inadvertent omission; and only the most irredeemably unmusical of literalists could take the rather hastily written sentence on p. xv of the preface—

The student will betimes avoid the neologism of playing the Mordent with any semitone other than the leading-note of the key—*e.g.*, on the dominant it requires no sharp.

(why not say simply that they must be diatonic?) so blindly as to play whole-tone mordents under the subdominant of major keys or the mediant or submediant of minor. When, however, the student reads what Professor Tovey says about Bach's authentic slurrings in the G sharp minor (Book II) prelude, he may for the moment be surprised to see none indicated in the text; a modicum of reflection will doubtlessly enable him to supply them in bars 2, 4, 17, 31 and 42, but their complete absence is a curious accident.

ERNEST WALKER.

BRITISH MUSICIANS A CENTURY AGO

A CENTURY ago there was a cry in Britain, or at least in its musical press, that the Britisher was not getting his just due in the world of music. Such journals as the *Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review* and the *Harmonicon* grumbled about the inattention paid to English opera in the British Isles, the disregard of the British composer in the concert programmes, and the neglect of the native performer. These journals were not even in their teens⁽¹⁾ and, as youth will have its fling, it was perhaps almost inevitable that they should become the estafettes of a few disgruntled professionals and a coterie of well-meaning but misguided amateurs who, in these days, played a rather important part in the musical life of the country.

At this period, London had experienced more than enough of English opera. From 1809, British composers were given every opportunity of showing their mettle in opera but failed dismally. Indeed, one particularly candid writer in the *Quarterly Musical Magazine* had the courage to say, in reply to the fanfares that were being sounded about English opera, that it was 'an insult to common sense and good taste.'⁽²⁾ It was not until 1824, when Weber's 'Der Freischütz' was produced in English, that managers realised that it was art, and not mere pandering to pro-national sentiment, that mattered. A whole run of German operas in English was the result.⁽³⁾

That the programmes of the Concerts of Ancient Music and those of the Philharmonic Society were devoted almost exclusively to the works of foreign composers was perfectly true, so far as instrumental music was concerned. At the Concerts of Ancient Music during the year 1823,⁽⁴⁾ sixty-seven per cent. of the vocal works were by foreigners (counting Handel among them) against thirty-three per cent. by Britishers, whilst among the instrumental compositions it was ninety-five per cent. against five.

In the realm of pure vocal music the British could certainly hold their own as composers, and in accompanied choral music even

(1) They were founded in 1818 and 1823 respectively.

(2) Vol. iii, 158.

(3) That Britishers were successful with opera a decade later does not affect the argument for the 'twenties.

(4) 1823 is chosen because of the biographical *Dictionary of Musicians* which was compiled in this year, and which is the subject of this article.

managed to get a footing. Yet there was always Handel to be reckoned with. A century earlier, the Saxon had conquered musical Britain, and it was still captive in 1823, although it would seem that the bonds were worth the bearing when we see what freedom meant.

At the Philharmonic, instrumental music held sway. Here again it was quite true that the Britisher was disregarded and, as we shall see presently, for precisely the same reason that he was ignored in this sphere at the other concerts. From the commencement of the Philharmonic Society in 1813 until the time that we are dealing with (1823), six single works of British composers saw light, a circumstance due probably as much to the fact that the latter were either promoters or members of the Philharmonic as to the real merit of their compositions. Admitting the disregard of the Britisher, one asks what gain could there have been in the exclusion of Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, Cherubini and Spohr, to make way for Griffin, Crotch, Potter, Burrows and Lindley?⁽⁵⁾

Frankly, there were no writers of instrumental music in the country who deserved a share of the musical honours. One of the opposition who wrote an article 'On the Encouragement of English Musical Talent,' was forced to admit that in the long run they had no 'symphonists.'⁽⁶⁾ Yet the real note was struck by another writer in the *Quarterly*, and it was typically British. 'Though we are full,' he says, 'brim full of genuine British predilections, we would prefer to see our countrymen lose the distinction they cannot fairly win, rather than suspect that they owe precedency or emolument to national prejudice.'⁽⁷⁾

As for the neglect of the native performer, there was little truth in the assertion. Of course, society set the pace in matters musical and when the English, I will not say the British, took the Hanoverians to their bosoms it was only natural that they should allow them their preferences for a musical diet which they had been used to. If the Royal Family wanted to patronise the foreigner, either because his musical delicacies suited their tastes or because he was a better performer, who could blame them? By the 'twenties, however, things had changed, and the Hanoverians, with all their faults, had become quite English in their tastes, and found that the British performer was now equal to, if not better than, the foreigner who was in the country. This applies equally to the vocalist as to the instrumentalist.

(5) That the Britisher had many difficulties to face before he received a hearing is stressed in the *Quarterly Musical Magazine*, v, 432.

(6) *Q.M.M.*, iii, 225.

(7) *Quarterly Musical Magazine*, ii, 390.

Taking everything into consideration at the time that we are speaking of, the British performer got all that he was entitled to.

However much the pro-national agitation was in the wrong in its *modus operandi*, it did a certain amount of good in one way or another. Indirectly it led to the establishment of the Royal Academy of Music in 1822-3, and the Society of British Musicians in 1834, both of which have contributed in some small way to the high position which British music holds to-day.

Not satisfied with complaining about the neglect of the Britisher at home, the movement found an opportunity to blame the Continent for its lack of recognition of the claims of British music. This protest found a special pleader in the compiler of the well-known biographical *Dictionary of Musicians* (1824)⁽⁸⁾ the 'paramount object' of which was to 'give due honour to the character of British artists [in music].' The author of this work has not hitherto been known although so diligent an investigator as James Matthew was on the trail.⁽⁹⁾ The present writer, however, happened to discover the original documents from which this work was compiled in the Euing Musical Library of the Royal Technical College at Glasgow,⁽¹⁰⁾ and these enable us to say quite definitely that the compiler was an enthusiastic amateur and publisher named John S. Sainsbury, who, in addition had a keen eye for business.⁽¹¹⁾

In 1823, the year in which he was compiling his *Dictionary of Musicians*, he was residing at 11, Bell's Buildings, Salisbury Square, Fleet Street, London. In 1825 he appears in the *London Directory* as 'Sainsbury and Co., Book and Music Seller: Proprietors of the *New Biographical Dictionary of Musicians* and the *Vocal Anthology*.' He also appears at the same address under a separate entry as 'Sainsbury and Co., Literary, Clerical, Scholastic, and General Agents.' In 1830 his business as bookseller and publisher is carried

(8) The half-title has:—*A Biographical and Historical Dictionary of Musicians*, but the title-page says:—*A Dictionary of Musicians, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Time. Comprising the Most Important Contents of the works of Gerber, Choron and Fayolle, Count Orloff, Dr. Burney, Sir John Hawkins, &c., &c., together with upwards of a Hundred Original Memoirs of the most Eminent Living Musicians, and a Summary of the History of Music.*

(9) Matthew, *The Literature of Music* (1896), 155.

(10) They are to be found in a box labelled 'Musical Auto-Biography' with the Press-mark 'R.c.23.'

(11) A second edition was issued in 1827, but rather than spend money he merely used up a stock of his old sheets of the first edition with a fresh title-page and preface. Yet he had the temerity to say some very unkind things about Gerber because he had neglected to add some further British names to the new issue of his *Historisch-biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler*. Indeed Sainsbury did not even trouble to correct his mistakes (and they had been pointed out to him) or even to incorporate the addenda to the first edition into their proper location in the second edition.

on at 35, Red Lion Square. Here he remained until 1844. After that we read of him no more.

The special reason for the publication of his biographical *Dictionary of Musicians*, according to Sainsbury, was that he was 'disgusted' at the 'prejudiced and ignorant appreciation of British talent' on the Continent. He was particularly wroth with two musicologists—Gerber, who had published a *Historisch-biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler* (1791) and a *Neues historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler* (1813), and Fayolle, who was responsible for a *Dictionnaire historique des musiciens* (1811).⁽¹²⁾ These writers, says Sainsbury, exhibit an 'inattention, almost approaching to an entire neglect, of the composers and musicians of Great Britain.' Fayolle, however, he says, was 'decidedly a great improvement on Gerber.' 'Still,' he continues, 'hardly any mention is made of the most celebrated artists in this country; indeed, the claims of England to the slightest consideration in the annals of music, appear to have been overlooked by both Fayolle [in the biographies] and by Choron in his summary of the art.'

To say that Choron did not give 'the slightest consideration' is the reverse of the truth. Choron gives place to the theorists Oddington and Handlo, notices the pre-eminence of Dunstable, and mentions the Elizabethan virginalists with approbation. To speak of Fayolle as 'a great improvement on Gerber' is quite untrue. As a matter of fact, Gerber's work, which was actually based on Walther's *Musicalisches Lexicon* (1732), gave liberal attention to British composers and other musicians. Under the letter 'A,' Gerber noted twenty-seven British names, whilst Fayolle only mentioned thirty, most of whom he borrowed verbatim from Gerber, but managed to spell five names incorrectly.

Sainsbury had a further complaint. The second edition of Gerber did not satisfy him. 'Hardly a single article relating to British musicians,' he says, 'received even a verbal alteration from his first edition.' This is also a most unfair statement. Gerber found room for ten other British musicians in his second edition, including such out of the way persons as Adamus Dorensis, the sixteenth century Master Allwoode, and the seventeenth century John Abell. He also made considerable additions to his previous articles, and in the section devoted to 'A,' the notices of both Thomas A. Arne and Samuel Arnold, which originally comprised a half-column each, were extended

(12) Sainsbury's dates are not quite satisfactory. The two volumes of Gerber's first edition are dated 1790 and 1792, whilst the four volumes of the second edition carry the dates 1812, 1813 and 1814. Fayolle's two volumes are dated 1810 and 1811.

to five and one columns respectively. Obviously, Sainsbury had to justify his publication, but to base his arguments on such palpable untruths is scarcely a creditable proceeding.

His next objection was the 'neglect, one might almost say contempt, with which the advocacy of the comparative merits of modern English music is met with in foreign society, the very names of such eminent professors as Samuel Webbe, Dr. Crotch, Wesley, Sir George Smart, etc., being frequently unknown to foreigners.' This statement, unlike those which have preceded, was very likely true, but Sainsbury does not appear to have troubled himself to the extent of seeking for some explanation of this 'neglect.' The Continent was not so near to Britain a century ago as it is to-day, and Sainsbury admits that prior to 1815 intercourse with the Continent was 'restrained.' Indeed, even Gerber and Fayolle would have had to depend, to some extent, on English opinion in evaluating contemporary British music, just as they had to depend on Hawkins, Burney, and *Chambers's Encyclopædia* for the earlier periods. One is therefore inclined to enquire what sources of information of current values of British music were at the disposal of the Continent at that time, or were in evidence at the period (1823-4) when Sainsbury was murmuring. There were three sources of information—the concert and festival programmes, the musical Press, and the histories and encyclopædias.

We have already seen that the programmes would have proved but a sorry guide to enquiring Germans or Frenchmen. If they had consulted these the result would have been to our disadvantage. Judged by modern standards (perhaps scarcely legitimate) the greatest of the four names lauded by Sainsbury was that of Webbe. Samuel Webbe (1740-1816) was a glee composer well known at the concerts, as he deserved to be. Yet his popularity was almost bound to be insular for the simple reason that the glee was almost entirely an English art form. William Crotch (1775-1847) and Samuel Wesley (1766-1837) were infant prodigies but, so far as the former was concerned, all that was prodigious ceased before his teens. Crotch became a University professor and Principal of the newly-established Royal Academy of Music, positions which enabled him to command attention whatever he may have deserved. His purely vocal works found occasional hearings at the concerts, but outside of that, public recognition of his music was practically *nil*. Wesley's compositions, mostly ecclesiastical, had some vogue in their particular sphere, but he was almost unknown at the concerts, although he was the greatest organist of his day and had lectured at the Royal Institution as Crotch had also done. At any rate, neither Crotch nor Wesley produced concerted instrumental music worthy of the name that would have

enabled them to escape from that 'neglect' on the Continent that had perturbed Sainsbury. Unfortunately for Crotch's reputation, his opinions of contemporary concerted instrumental music has been preserved in his literary works. Fortunately for Wesley's reputation his concerted instrumental works are unknown. As for Sir George Smart (1776-1867), he was assuredly the leading conductor in the country, but the Continent had not fallen into the British habit of preferring foreigners in person to their own countrymen, whatever attitude may have been adopted towards their works.

Perhaps a better guide in the question of evaluations would be the English musical periodicals, although these were in their infancy. There had been a *New Musical . . . Magazine* (1774-5) which scarcely deserved the name, and Busby's *Monthly Musical Journal* (1801) which did not survive its fourth issue, whilst Kollmann's *Quarterly Musical Register* (1812) and the *English Musical Gazette* (1819) had a worse fate.⁽¹³⁾ From 1818 to 1829 there was the *Quarterly Musical Magazine*, and from 1829 to 1833 the *Harmonicon*. These two journals had some of the best writers of the day contributing to their pages, and they had considerable influence. Yet one may scan their contents in vain for that 'advocacy of the comparative merits of modern English music' that Sainsbury harps on, as illustrated in the works of Webbe, Crotch, Wesley and Smart. Apart from Webbe, who was dead, not one of the other three are given attention beyond the mere news mention of their names. Is it to be wondered at that the Continent should 'neglect' them?

Finally, there were the histories and encyclopedias. If the writings of Hawkins (1776) and Burney (1776-89) were out of date, it must be remembered that they were all that Gerber or Fayolle had to guide them. For contemporary estimation of British music there was Busby's *General History of Music* (1819), yet there was nothing very startling in the way of appreciation there. Webbe, according to Busby, had 'merit above mediocrity,' whilst Crotch, a much inferior composer, was allowed to claim 'no mean repute' for his anthems, and was dubbed 'an original author' on account of his oratorio 'Palestine.' Wesley was counted among the organists, although Smart was considered to stand alone as a conductor.

As for the encyclopedias, they were more barren still. There were but two of these to guide enquirers. The first was *An Universal Dictionary of Music* (ca. 1800), now rather a scarce work, since there is not a copy at the British Museum.⁽¹⁴⁾ It appears to have been

(13) These journals are not mentioned in *Grove's Dictionary of Music* in the article on 'Musical Periodicals.'

(14) There is a copy in the Euing Musical Library with the Press-mark 'B.x.29.'

published piece-meal, since it only got as far as the article 'Marcello,' a circumstance which would lead one to suppose that there was some of that 'ignorant appreciation of British talent,' as Sainsbury would say, in these 'Tight Little Islands' as well as on the Continent. Out of the forty-eight musicians noticed under the letter 'A,' fourteen are British, which is not a bad percentage in a 'Universal' dictionary, and above all, for a 'neglected' nation, although King Alfred and Queen Anne had to be pressed into service. More important still was Rees' famous *Cyclopædia* (1819), in which the articles on music and musicians were written by no less a person than Dr. Burney. Under the letter 'A,' seven British musicians were mentioned, but no notice was taken of Webbe, Crotch, Wesley or Smart, and this happened only five years before Sainsbury made his protest about the way the Continent had neglected these musicians.

Having examined every tittle of evidence brought forward by Sainsbury in support of his charges of 'neglect,' we must confess that there were little grounds for them. Time, the vindicator of all things, has proved that he was wrong, even if he were right, to use an Hibernicism. One sidelight on the question is worth adverting to, and that is the attitude of what ought to have been the very stronghold of the pro-national movement, the Royal Academy of Music. During the two years immediately following Sainsbury's protest (1825-6), there were series of concerts given by the students of the Academy, in which a total of eighty works were performed. Out of these two were by British composers, both of whom, Crotch and Lucas, were connected with the Academy.

We have seen the reasons assigned for the publication of Sainsbury's biographical *Dictionary of Music* of 1824, and we may now turn to the work itself. The title-page tells us that it was based 'on the most important biographical contents of the works of Gerber, Choron and Fayolle, Count Orloff, Dr. Burney, Sir John Hawkins, etc., together with upwards of a hundred original memoirs of the most eminent living musicians and a summary of the history of music.' In spite of his censure of Choron for having 'overlooked' British claims in his 'Summary of the art,' Sainsbury actually uses an English translation of this identical 'summary' as an introduction to his work, and without even attempting the interpolation of a solitary line about British claims, the omission of which had so annoyed him in Choron, although he had at his elbow Busby's well-planned, if voluble, *General History of Music* (1819) which had featured these claims.

Perhaps there was some excuse for this omission if we can accept the plea put forward in his preface that the task of compiling the dictionary was rather more than his time allowed. He confessed to a certain

amount of haste and we believe that the chief cause of this was certain information that had reached him about a rival publication, which is hinted at in a letter in the Euing Musical Library as follows :

[UNDATED.]

I learn from J. B. Cramer that there is another book going forward with all Dispatch as a Supplement to Dr. Burney's and another work (Name I forget), but the parties that have addressed Cramer are a Mr. Parker, Northumberland St., W. Strand, and a Mr. Close or Klose—

. . . Could you possibly send Bochsa the first Volume of Choron to-day that he may not have cause for further Delay. I will take it with me to Lindley's.

[UNSIGNED.]

It was this letter which probably stamped Sainsbury into unnecessary haste, although it would appear that his fears were groundless so far as an immediate publication of a rival work was concerned.⁽¹⁵⁾ Incidentally this letter seems to show that the 'Summary of the History of Music' translated from the French of Choron, which Sainsbury used as an introduction, was done by R. N. C. Bochsa (1789-1856), then Professor of the Harp and General Secretary at the Royal Academy of Music.

The value of Sainsbury's work was vested in the hundred-odd original memoirs of musicians, both native and foreign, then living in the British Isles. On this account, his work still has a value, as James Matthew once pointed out.⁽¹⁶⁾ The information that it gave concerning these was the foundation of subsequent biographies, including both *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and the *Dictionary of National Biography*, although it is not referred to as their authority.⁽¹⁷⁾

No doubt it was obvious to most readers that these biographies were based on actual information received directly or indirectly from the individuals concerned, yet few could have suspected that Sainsbury reproduced almost verbatim what these musicians had written about themselves including, very often, their own opinions of their abilities. It is interesting, if not amusing, to find an individual writing to Sainsbury expressing the hope that he will not consider the remarks about himself 'too complimentary,' and then coolly proceeding to refer to himself as 'one of the most popular writers of the day.'⁽¹⁸⁾

(15) We cannot trace any work of the class alluded to that was published at this time. The other individual alluded to was probably F. J. Klose (1784-1830). A letter from him to Sainsbury, who had asked him for biographical details, also hints at a rival work. He says:—'In reply to your note of the 20th, I beg to say that some time ago a friend drew up something for a particular purpose. . . . It was never made use of.'

(16) *The Literature of Music*, 155.

(17) *Grove* (2nd edit., i, 698) says that Sainsbury's work, 'though good in intention, was imperfectly carried out.' The writer does not say what these 'imperfections' were, although he himself commits one in giving the date of Sainsbury's publication as 1822 instead of 1824.

(18) J. F. Burrowes.

In some cases the identical phraseology may be traced as far down as the present *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

In raking high and low (he does not appear to have worked to a scale or standard) Sainsbury collected quite a mixed lot. As was to be expected, not all those to whom he applied consented to give the necessary information. Those who saw their only chance of fame in the offer, seized the opportunity with both hands. Others were so dilatory that they had to be written to a second or third time. Some replied that they were 'nobodies' and politely declined.⁽¹⁹⁾ Others protested that they were 'somebodies' and made bold to say that the omission of their names from the dictionary would have been to its disadvantage.⁽²⁰⁾ One poor man said that with a wife and nine children to provide for he had little time to think about details of his professional career,⁽²¹⁾ whilst another told Sainsbury that he had received three applications from him for information and he did not want a fourth.⁽²²⁾ Some who had not been asked took advantage to volunteer information,⁽²³⁾ whilst others were so busy professionally that they said that they had no time to write but would consent to be interviewed.⁽²⁴⁾

There are over a hundred of these autograph letters or dictated biographies in the Euing Musical Library, and they are the actual documents that were used by Sainsbury for the '*hundred original memoirs of the most eminent living musicians*' that appeared in his *Dictionary of Musicians* of 1824. All of these documents were edited, more or less, by Sainsbury according to needs. He changed the first to the third person in the narrative, introduced judicious cuts in what he considered to be extraneous matter, and occasionally resorted to expressing his own opinion, whilst he also corrected or improved grammar, syntax, orthography and punctuation with a liberal hand.

Much of the deleted matter provides interesting material to biographers. Probably about twenty-five per cent. of new matter is to be found here. One particular feature is the dates. Sainsbury was content with the year only, and almost invariably he deleted the day and month. This gap exists at present in both *Grove's Dictionary of Music* and in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, but these documents enable us to repair the breach. In some cases also, where modern authorities are at variance in these matters, the Euing documents, written by or for the individuals themselves, will be found useful in settling the point at issue.

HENRY GEORGE FARMER.

(19) William Ball.

(20) Andrew Ashe.

(21) Nathaniel Cooke.

(22) Dr. William Carnaby.

(23) Thomas Billington.

(24) J. B. Cramer.

THE VOICE OF THE MACHINE

IN the July issue of *MUSIC AND LETTERS*, the Editor remarks that 'wireless has given a tremendous jolt to all our ideas and it will take time to readjust them.' It may possibly help towards their speedier readjustment if we try to analyse the difference that undoubtedly exists between musical sounds produced by means of electrical oscillations and the vibrations of real music. For curiously enough, in all the cries of alarm and the protests that are raised against radios and gramophones, it is apparently taken for granted that mechanical reproductions are identical with real music.

Not long ago, Mr. West, in the first of his three Cantor Lectures delivered before the Society of Arts, said that the Gramophone Company was at present expecting, by means of some newly-discovered process, to produce such perfect records 'that even the most hardened critic would be unable to tell the difference between the reproduction and the original.'⁽¹⁾ This, to my mind, is a Utopian dream on the part of the Gramophone Company. There is a difference, and the difference is not only vital but permanent.

About the first time I remember hearing a gramophone, the people with whom I was staying were madly enthusiastic over their new toy, not only for its own sake, but because the dog didn't mind. Hitherto, there had always been a regular scuffle to secure him in the back regions before any music was possible, as he invariably set up a howl of agony when the piano was touched. The gramophone however, even though unpleasantly blaring and grinding, as it was in those days, left him quite unperturbed.

This gave me my first clue to the possible existence of a difference in vibrant intensity. In quest of knowledge, I dived into the article on 'Sound' in the new *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Being no mathematician, I soon found myself completely out of my depth. One sentence, however, I retained: 'Near the limits of audibility, loudness may be very feeble, although the intensity be very great.'⁽²⁾ Is it possible then that loud music, mechanically reproduced, has no intensity at all?

I next turned up the article on 'Broadcasting,' where I read: 'The receiver currents are made to move a diaphragm in the telephones or

(1) *Musical Opinion*, April, 1931.

(2) Vol. *xxi*, p. 7.

loud speaker which, with action inverse to that of the microphone, produces pressures in the surrounding air making a *recognisable imitation* of the sound acting upon the distant microphone.'⁽³⁾ And here I think we have the crux of the whole matter. Music emitted by an earphone or a loud speaker is not real music; however great the *loudness*, it is but a recognisable imitation, lacking in vibrant intensity. In other words, the coldness of it that we all feel is due to the absence of what Liszt called '*le milieu sonore*.' If we are gifted with creative imagination, we can enjoy much.

We all know the feeling of boredom at having to look at a number of picture postcards that a friend has collected on his travels. The friend treasures them as reminders of things he has really seen, and they are sufficient to freshen his memory and stimulate his creative imagination. But we, who have not seen these things, cannot, with the best will in the world, see with his eyes. In the same way, if the general lines of interpretation do not violently clash with one's memory of a superlative performance of a certain work, a radio performance of it or a gramophone record suffice to galvanise one's creative imagination, and one listens with corresponding enthusiasm.

But apart from this particular case, reaction to wireless is a purely mental experience. We listen with interest, approval, or disapproval as the case may be; but in our hearts, we are unmoved. We may decide whether it will be worth while going to hear a certain work or a certain artist when occasion offers; but this is merely a process of pigeonholing things in one's brain, without a quickening of the pulse. If, for purposes of study, we want to listen dispassionately to a great artist so as to follow exactly what he does without being carried away, a mechanical reproduction is the ideal medium.

Whereas, in listening to real music, one is liable to be carried away, as it is not only a mental, but also a sensuous experience. Have we not all, at one time or another, experienced a feeling of renewal, of physical health and fitness after a first-rate concert, first-rate both as regards the music played and the performing artist? This, I feel sure, is because the music, in addition to one's mental and emotional response to beauty, has acted on one's physical body more potently and beneficially than any tonic. There can be no doubt that musical vibrations affect one's body quite apart from any mental response. I recall a man who was stone-deaf who came to me in the green room after a concert to say how much he had enjoyed it. He explained to me that he felt the vibrations in the soles of his feet, and that they did him good. The atrophy of his ears had evidently caused other nerve

(3) Vol. iv, p. 214.

centres to develop beyond the normal, just as the blind learn to 'see' colours with their hands. On the other hand, some people cannot stand very powerful vibrations; I know a lady who loves music, but who turns faint and sick when an organ plays full blast. I also recall a theory of Sir Henry Head's, that in the same way that a candlestick or a copper pot may annoy a pianist by buzzing in sympathy with a certain note, so the human organism is in tune with, and perceptibly vibrates to, one special note which varies in pitch and intensity with each individual. (Incidentally, this may possibly explain why many people have a favourite key and a preference for music in that tonality.)

Our appreciation of or aversion to the radio is largely a question of sensibility and depends upon whether we are highly-strung or thick-skinned. The super-sensitive are inclined to hold aloof, as the shocks of interference and extraneous noise outweigh their possible enjoyment. This will right itself with the improvement of all the necessary apparatus. The sensitive harden their hearts (or rather their ears) while tuning in to the station they want, and mentally readjust what they hear with the help of their creative imagination. The non-sensitive make hay while the sun shines, get all the 'music' they can, the more, the merrier. Radio licences have been increasing in England alone by about half a million annually for the last three years; there are said to be fifteen million radio fans in the United States and six hundred and ten broadcasting stations. One wonders whether all these people have suddenly discovered that they are 'musical,' or are they merely enthralled by their new toy, their Pandora's box, whose chief fascination consists in never quite knowing what is going to come out of it? I am optimistic enough to venture to prophesy that the good music they hear will percolate and recruit entirely new audiences for real concerts. Also, that those who already had music in their lives before the coming of reproductive machines will gain enormously in discrimination through familiarity with records by really great performers.

But it is to be hoped that the non-sensitive will take pity on us and use earphones instead of loud speakers. Audition is better with earphones, and their general adoption is the best way of quelling the pandemonium that has broken loose from hitherto inoffensive neighbours.

The coming of the radio has had the paradoxical result of filling the air with music of every description and, at the same time, of throwing thousands of executant musicians temporarily out of work.

Hence the cries of alarm that I have already mentioned. There is danger, according to Ernest Newman, 'in making the mere listening to music too easy a thing.'⁽⁴⁾ 'Public opinion,' says Professor Tobias Mathay, 'must be aroused to the grave danger ahead,'⁽⁵⁾ because people won't trouble to study music when they can get it from a machine with no trouble at all. But surely, people who have music in the marrow of their bones are also born with an inward urge to make it for themselves; if the gift, training or opportunity has been lacking in their lives, they demand the real thing from others. Those who think that they need not trouble to learn to play because machines can do it just as well, are only a step above the fisherman's wife who cooks for me during the holidays, and who greeted me this year with the startling announcement that she could 'faire de la musique' just as well as I could. 'I thought it must be difficult,' she told me, 'because I have heard Mademoiselle practising for hours, but I find it is quite easy.' She had, of course, acquired a gramophone.

'Possibly a reaction against mechanical music will set in' is the solution offered by Geo. Buckley.⁽⁶⁾ I think 'reaction' is too strong a word. 'A readjustment of our ideas with regard to mechanical music' is more to the point. We can profit by the machines in an infinite number of ways; records are invaluable for reference and for educative purposes. A recording machine can already be bought for a small sum and students might find it the best lesson they ever had if they could hear themselves play or sing. I really do not see that executant musicians need look upon the machine as an enemy which is taking the bread out of their mouths and which they would destroy if they could in self-protection, like the inhabitants of Erewhon. On the contrary, in the long run, the machine will prove to be a faithful servant which not only captures and preserves their ephemeral performances, but increases their audiences a thousandfold.

The machines may even serve them a good turn by improving their actual performances. A singer with a rough note or two may be able to have his records touched up as easily as though they were photographs. Reproductive apparatus may also serve composers, who, if they so choose, may be able to eliminate interpreters altogether and write their music with a graving tool directly on to the wax with mathematical precision and certainty of obtaining the desired result,

(4) *Radio Times*, June 15, 1931.

(5) *Radio Times*, May 29, 1931.

(6) *The Observer*, May 3, 1931.

regardless of whether their conception is producible on any known musical instruments or not.⁽⁷⁾

Broadcasters also have an immense field of future possibilities before them. A most suggestive article on 'Creative Broadcasting' appeared in the April number of *MUSIC AND LETTERS*, opening out new horizons. Broadcasting has already, in certain ways, surpassed the original performance. When a clavichord recital was broadcast from Daventry on April 16, the volume of sound reached Paris at least three times life-size. I am so accustomed to the voice of my clavichord in the privacy of my chamber that it was an uncanny experience, as though this clavichord from London had been tasting the cake that made Alice grow large in Wonderland.

The domain of mechanised music is indeed a Wonderland. The only possible danger to the future of music, as far as I can see, is that through familiarity people may come to prefer the coldness of it to the stirring influence of real music; a good many instruments have been invented which, *when played upon*, produce music by means of lamps and electrical oscillations instead of vibrating strings or pipes. But I feel sure that as long as we have hearts as well as brains, that is a remote peril. The invention of imitation gems has not lowered the price of real ones; neither will the invention of imitation music lower the value of the real thing.

DOROTHY SWAINSON.

(7) See E. Vuillermor: discussion of these new inventions (*Excelsior*, Paris, May 14, 1931).

IS THERE A HIGHEST ART?

'O PAINTING,' says Faure, '... sublime art, the highest, the most subtle.' 'Music,' says Hadow, 'rises into such heights of sublimity as no other art can attain.' 'The supreme art ... Literature, the perfect expression of life,' says Wilde.

The answer from each is that form which means most to him, since to none do all the arts appeal equally. So that if the question is to have any value at all, some absolute standard must be sought. Is it to be the degree of beauty? No, for beauty dwells equally in all the arts. Shall it be that of difficulty? Does historical sequence give the clue?

The carving of little figures and statuettes in ivory or stone appears to have been man's first essay in fine art. Painting, to the modern mind, is so obvious a form of expression that we forget how unnatural it first seemed to reduce solid objects to a flat surface. The Altamiran cave bears witness how early this objection was overcome. Already in the Paleolithic dawn man expressed himself amazingly in colour and line, whilst his speech, it seems certain, was yet rudimentary. One is tempted to wonder why most of the great masters of painting have been oldish men. Is it due to its transcendental nature, or because no other form so much needs the union in one artist of 'the heart to conceive, the understanding to direct, and the hand to execute,' complete synthesis of the triad coming only with the years?

Sculpture and architecture, the one so concrete and the other so abstract, both look out upon us with their stony faces from ages that seem even more fabulous than those of the far older cave paintings.

The fact that primitive speech is poetic in its mood and manner suggests that poetry as a distinct art is nearly as old as the last two mentioned forms, albeit no records exist. Indeed, with the Aryan races the epic reached its apogee before the plastic arts. Music, the second abstract art, came in its fullness so late in the day that it would tempt one to theorise on the gradual sweep of art through time from the concrete and imitative to the abstract, were it not that architecture humps the wrong end of the curve by appearing so early. And although music is infinitely more difficult technically than poetry, for every youthful poetic genius of the first order there have

been many musical ones—Mozart, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Leken, to name but a few.

The criteria suggested then are so contradictory and compensatory that they are no criteria at all. Genius is too independent of method, technique or period. A consideration of the elements of the arts does, however, get us a little nearer to an answer.

Nature has musical sounds, but no music. 'Suppose the singing birds, musicians.' Thus Gaunt to his exiled son; and with this poignant counsel Shakespeare reveals the gulf between the two. Music, then, is not imitative, but abstract and 'useless' (I am speaking, of course, of absolute music, the rich, symphonic dance of the mind). Its time element is strong in melody, its space element in harmony. Its origin remains a mystery, for no biological theory as to 'sex-calls of animals' or 'development from emotional speech' is adequate to explain why one musical phrase is good and another bad.

Architecture, wherein space dominates rhythm, shares with music its essential abstraction, but is nevertheless strongly utilitarian. Only just now climbing from that decadent second-hand state—the poor shadow of abstraction—in which it has lain for a century or more, nevertheless at its best it summed up more vividly than aught else the Greek and Gothic souls.

So in fact does all art gain by forswearing some aspect of the real, otherwise a good waxwork would be the highest form of art. Sculpture yields colour and painting solidity. Painting, emerging from mere illustration or didactic story-telling, and concerning itself with the arrested glories of light and form, becomes as sublime as it is subtle and as hard to judge as it is little appreciated. Absolute music has yielded most of all; therein lies its power.

Poetry, whose only tangible existence is in marks on paper, has more elements than all the rest—time in its rhythm and sequence, space in its imagery, music and mimicry in its harmonies, and intellect in its meaning. Why, therefore, should it not be the highest?

At this point the meaning of 'highest' must be fought out.

Fürst has suggested that music may not be the highest art for the paradoxical and sole reason that it is the most physical; that is, it impinges directly and inescapably on the mind through the aural sense. Such a quality would place it no higher than wind or rain and although these have both at the critical moment turned the course of battles and the fate of empires, we no longer regard them as utterances of the gods.

When in doubt the simplest meaning serves. 'Highest,' if it is to mean anything, must mean the most above earth, the most spiritual.

Even as in climbing a mountain we leave behind the misleading diversities of earth, the coarse claims of nature and life, and attain to an exalted atmosphere whence we look back on and reevaluate things in their true perspective, so is art great in the same degree. The fact that all the tongues of Babel clamour for their different purposes of art need disturb us no more than the disputes of the great on the most straightforward questions. Our instinct and common sense adopt and reinforce the pronouncements of no less than France and Baudelaire, that art is to deal with the supernatural. Faure expresses it: 'Once the threshold of mystery is crossed, art regains its whole dominion.'

This, of course, does not mean it toys with miracles or creeds. Its purpose is to interpret the central mystery of reality, and in seeking to do so, it wrests and always has wrested the great problem from theology. The greatest art attains, not exactly to religion, but to a transcendental or metaphysical state. That form is the highest which is the finest crystallisation of that state.

Now surely, it will be contended, this is an intellectual matter and the most intellectual form wins. Were this absolutely true, philosophy itself, which is concentrated thought and nothing else, would be the supreme art; but we know it is not, for it reduces the vital and flowing universe to fixed formulæ. It would seem the claim lies with literature and particularly poetry. The non-musical man will dismiss music as being non-intellectual. How, he will ask, can a mere sequence of sounds—vibrations of layers of air—contain the meaning of the mystery of the universe?

The answer embodies the reason why many think music may be the greatest of arts. It is because words are inadequate; and truth has never limited itself to that thought which can proceed consciously by words. It is in the last resort a matter of intuition. We use thought largely to confirm our biases, our instinctive attitudes, which really decide vital questions for us. Intellectual thought leads us to the threshold of the mystery and leaves us there. How little does the barren statement of the Credo convey the passion of Christianity!

Consider the plight of philosophy. Its learned language is really meaningless. It writes in such words as 'God' and 'absolute' where it cannot express itself, just as the Ancients drew monsters across the unknown parts of maps. Anatole France, in his delightful discourse on 'The Language of Metaphysics,' striving to get a meaning out of the pretentious sentence 'The spirit possesses God in proportion as it participates in the absolute,' is driven to the early Aryan meaning of the words, thus: 'The heath is seated by the shining one in the bushel of the part it takes in what is altogether

loosed.' And elsewhere: 'What he [the Metaphysician] styles profound speculation and transcendental method is only setting in a row, . . . arbitrarily arranged, the onomatopoeic noises wherewith the brutes expressed hunger and fear and desire in the primeval forests, and to which have gradually become attached meanings assumed to be abstract only because they are less definite.'

Poetry is far wiser. It captures more truth by a bold use of concrete words and images. With its 'vacant jaws of darkness' it conveys more than the 'nothingness' of philosophy. First-class poetry uses few and ordinary words. Its magic lies in their relationships; in their placing altogether new images, and truths are evoked and a fourth dimensional quality seems to leap into them. That tends to show the greatness of poetry lies rather in its time and musical elements than in its reasoning. Indeed, its reasoning is often capricious and arbitrary. The natural urge to leap into poetry and, were it possible, music, at the point of greatest rapture or pressure of thought may be due to relapse at emotional moments to primitive modes, but it may also indicate that here is a sudden flash of revelation down an avenue that is yet to lead to higher consciousness.

Pater said that all the arts ever strive to attain the condition of music, a theory already put consciously into practice by Mallarmé. Music is almost self-sufficing. It is fourth dimension without the other three. It alone can attain to pure beauty, for no other art can escape entirely from the external world. That does not mean it is *more* beautiful, for by the cast of our minds we cling to the solid forms of life. Neither is that 'purely beautiful' music necessarily the finest. Many of us get the impression that in pure beauty something is lost, and we count later Beethoven higher than middle Mozart. Music less perfect but more spiritually charged means most to the human soul. Every work of art is great as its material husk sounds ghostly overtones, and in great music they are set free in a Hallelujah chorus undimmed by the deadweight of the husk. In the ideal song—fine poetry set to fine music—it is these overtones of the poetry that are caught and heightened by the music.

It has always been felt that the mystery of the universe resides most in the depths of the human soul and makes its presence known by all the hopes and yearnings and indescribable feelings experienced, in some degree, by every man. Art alone can express them coherently and the logic of the expression is called 'form.' The average man reacts to the expression as he is able or not to recognise his own feelings in it.

Now language, which has advanced little within history (save in commercial 'punch'), is adequate to voice yearnings for a new

saucepan or for pensions at forty but not for the thousand and one more elusive feelings. It is still poor in words for these subjective states. 'Words fail me' is our humble echo for Wordsworth's

To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

And surely, far, far too deep for words or the poet would have said those words. Is it not significant this confession should crown the ode which earlier finds its culmination in sheer music—'And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore'? Significant, too, that some of the sublimest poets were blind and the greatest composer deaf? Thus were the former left free to hear the inner sonorities of words and the latter the inner music of the mind. Here is an indication that the climb of art is through sound to the aural nerves and thus to the recesses of the soul.

Matthew Arnold reminds us of that inexpressible residue of the poet:

Hardly his voice at its best
Gives us a sense of the awe,
The vastness, the grandeur, the gloom
Of the unlit gulf of himself.

Appearances and descriptions based on them serve for everyday purposes, but science shows that appearances are illusions and the more modern physics dissolves visual imagery with paradox the less and less are we able to substitute a real description in place of the illusion. Music, by not 'saying' anything about them, may well be telling us of the things themselves. If every word, as France puts it, 'is the image of an image and the symbol of an illusion,' every combination of notes meaningless in themselves, may be the very symbol of reality.

So it is possible that music is the stone dropped into the gulf to sound its depth where light fails; that it alone is the adequate mirror of all for which words give but blurred images, the voice of that for which words are dumb.

Music is a creation in itself, or as Schopenhauer so happily expressed it, 'a second reality analogous but different to the other.' Springing from nowhere out of *le néant*, into it the soul has projected its world. It is as if the life force, stifled by the stumbling, mumbling language of words, wrought music to give its thought and aspiration wings. To carry the Shavian parallel further, substituting 'souls' for 'thoughts,' it may represent the stage between the past and the future where the Ancients communicate their thoughts without any interposing media whatever. At once it must be admitted that this last is pure speculation, for we cannot readily

conceive art without abiding, tangible evidence. We cannot conceive its spirit divorced from sensuous form. Art is the noblest monument to pantheism.

Unable to express ideas or creeds, to argue or deduce, music starts where these finish and goes further in the climb. The saying is attributed to Beethoven that 'Music is a higher revelation than the whole of wisdom and of philosophy.' We feel this to be highly probable; that words cannot say what that revelation is, is precisely why music is doing so and alone can do so.

'Music,' says Wilde, 'never yields its ultimate secret.' It is vague and fluid as life itself and on that account good music bears infinite repetition. We can only give a rough key to it by words, for most of us can only think at all in words, although we may understand in music. And the secret is greater than the key.

These claims for music are none the less true because so small a portion of created music may possess these intensely revelatory qualities. They would stand proven alone on a slender handful of masses and symphonies, sonatas and quartets, particularly the last four quartets of Beethoven. These come, in W. J. N. Sullivan's words, 'from the profoundest depths of the human soul that any artist has ever sounded.' They are above the analysis of language. With the Ninth Symphony, they are unique not only in music, but in the whole range of art.

It may well be that music, and therefore all art, reached its apogee in them. This was not only because of the coincidence of instrumental perfection, any more than did the Tourte bow produce a Chopin of the violin. When the old universal language of words and the spiritual unity of the Middle Ages had gone, when the nations were most hardening into isolation, then music arose with its mighty voice, vague and universal, calling to man across the frontiers, making him aware of his essential unity, creating and fanning his confused aspirations towards the New Man, the New World. Then, too, did it search furthest down man's inner resources, plumbing with its greater wisdom the mystery which science had ignored.

For a time art could go no deeper; it turned, as always, back to everyday life and physical things, and in the novel of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, sought to say what had first been felt in music, and to put it to the test in life, using the vehicle of prose, which at its finest has the broken rhythm of thought itself.

Science presents the species as a general proposition. Art takes the concrete example and thereby makes the species real. Music,

dispensing even with that concrete one, goes straight to the essence of the one and the whole.

It is intensely objective in that inescapably physical nature which enables it above all things on earth to give the divine madness to man. And by virtue of the paradox inherent in every art it thereby becomes most subjective; in music, could I create it, I would find projected, not myself of the hands and face and hair, but the most real of all my selves. Explaining least it reveals most. It is so truthful that if it could be rendered in pictures or words, the best of it would be banned by the Herd as blasphemous, seditious or indecent. To speak the truth, said Wilde, one must wear a mask. Music is our most glorious mask.

S. H. KESSELS.

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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Erich Schwabach: *Joh. Seb. Bach und die Kunst der Fuge* (Orient-Occident. Verlag. 1931).

In a country where the *Kunst der Fuge* has not yet been publicly performed, we should give a grateful hearing to any voice that calls attention to it. This Dr. Schwabach does to the length of 350 pages. Comparatively few of these, however, refer either to the composition or its composer. Dr. Schwabach does not claim to have brought anything new to musical analysis or the study of fugal construction. His mission is to interpret Bach's life and his last work according to the 'anthroposophical' principles of Rudolf Steiner. Bach, he tells us, was the bodily instrument prenatally forged for its own ends by a *Schicksal* which had been working itself out through many generations: the *Kunst der Fuge* is the pattern or symbol of the macrocosmos as reproduced in the spirit of Bach—a world conceived first as 'unhörbare Musik' and then descending to earthy and contrapuntal modes of expression. Curious readers will unravel threads from the philosophical webs of Goethe, Schopenhauer and many more: captious ones will note misinterpretations of the supposed theories of Pythagoras, whose conception of music as a principle of the structure of the universe had nothing to do with music as an art, and whose view (if he held one) of the Harmony of the Spheres was anything but contrapuntal, and referred to a sort of tuning-up of independent notes. The ideas propounded in the greater part of the first section of Schwabach's book apply no more to the *Kunst der Fuge* than to any other work of music or of art in general (except in so far as the *Kunst* is taken as a convenient illustration of them), and are not suitable for discussion in a musical journal.

Dr. Schwabach has a chapter on the life of Bach and another on the textual tradition of the *Kunst*. In the latter he omits to mention the significant fact that there is no certain evidence for the authenticity of the title '*Kunst der Fuge*,' and in discussing the modern editions he gives no valid reason for his rejection of the order adopted by David. He himself embraces the edition of Wolfgang Gräser (which is certainly more satisfactory, but he does not say why), and proceeds to analyse the work *fuge by fuge*.

This section of the book will prove instructive to musicians as well as anthroposophists, for the author knows his subject and misses few points. His discourse on the theme, however, leaves us in the air. It is doubtful whether a *fuge* may be said to be contained potentially in its subject, and this subject, though admirably chosen, is not remarkable for intrinsic beauty. Schwabach rightly comments on the unwieldiness of Frederick the Great's theme developed by Bach in the *Musikalisches Opfer*, and contrasts the flexibility of Bach's own choice in the *Kunst*. He does not think it worth while to discuss a possible relation between the two themes—a suggestion thrown out by Sanford Terry which deserves further pursuit, and might perhaps lead

to some more definite thoughts about the chromatic sequences of the XIth fugue than Schwebsch has given us.

His view of the order in which the fugues should stand is continually vitiated by considerations subjective and anthroposophical rather than musical and scholarly. He entertains the hypothesis that Fugue VIII should immediately precede XI, only to reject it. Yet the separation of these two fugues makes the whole far harder to understand; for VIII, which consists of material inverted from XI, cannot be explained until XI has followed on it. If IX and X are to be retained in their place it must be out of respect for the authority of the 1750 score: Schwebsch explains their intervention by a *petitio principii*, arguing that they fulfil the conditions of the macrocosmic interpretation which he sets out to establish.

He has not observed that the theme of X is derived from IV, but calls it a variation of the original theme, which we are unable to detect in it.

His treatment of the Bach-theme is over-mystical. We need not say that Bach introduced his name in the spirit of an acrostic—at least it is an exquisite acrostic, and nobody has seen more clearly than Dr. Schwebsch with what admirable genius and ingenuity he weaves it into the structure of the work. But to call it a symbol of *Ichheit* and a birth of self-realisation is so foreign to our notions of Bach's mentality as to be meaningless. The motive of his choosing such a theme is irrelevant, and the motive of its development is purely musical.

It is perhaps to be expected that a world which ignored the *Kunst* for 180 years should now do it the opposite injury of making it a cult. Far as it is from being a pedant's *tour-de-force* for the exercise of professionals, it is still less a symbol of modern German theosophies and cosmic evolutions. We must gladly endorse Dr. Schwebsch's enthusiastic judgment that it is a work of art to be played and heard, and we can only feel humiliated before the labour and care which he has spent upon so great a work. But its students will do it no service by attaching to it irrelevant depths of meaning, however profound in their own sphere such meanings may be. In England, where its notes are still unheard, we wait for illumination on the music of it, and willingly leave its occult significances to those who know it better.

ISOBEL MUNRO.

Fact and Fiction about Wagner. By Ernest Newman. Cassell. 8s. 6d.

The preface to Mr. Ernest Newman's latest book opens with a gesture of defiance. 'It may be thought by some people,' he says, 'that an apology is due from me for having written yet another book on Wagner. I am unrepentant, however; indeed, it would take very little provocation to make me not only glory in my shame but add to it.' Surely the gesture was superfluous. For one thing, he could not have written the present work if he had not gone so deeply into Wagnerian lore before; for another, one would almost think it impossible even for him to tell us still more about the subject. If there is another author living who has the facts of the vast bulk of literature by and about Wagner at his fingers' ends as Mr. Newman evidently

has them, one would like to meet him, unless, of course, one chanced to be among the hapless crew that permits itself the luxury of attacking the garrison of the Villa Wahnfried inadequately armed.

It may be an amusing spectacle to see the author of *Wagner as Man and Artist*, a book which mercilessly exhibits the composer's character in all its turpitude, standing up for him so valorously in this new volume. But Mr. Newman is consistently out for truth. He once exposed Wagner's weaknesses and meannesses because they had been all too long deliberately glossed over, not to say twisted to his advantage, by adulatory and sycophantic writers, and he gave chapter and verse for his accusations. Now he challenges two authors who were injudicious enough to attack Wagner, and more especially Cosima, without being able to adduce satisfactory proof, partly because they were not qualified to discover it and partly because it existed only in their imagination. Messrs. Philip Dutton Hurn and Waverley Lewis Root, who in 1929 took it upon themselves to publish what they called *The Truth about Wagner*, will have no choice but to consider themselves crushed by Mr. Newman, the second half of whose book is wholly devoted to the exposure of the falsity of their accusations. Mr. Newman, in the double capacity of detective and counsel for the prosecution, does a brilliant and engrossing piece of work, submitting his brief point by point with a lucidity that cannot fail to convince any jury of readers.

The first part of the book one must confess to finding less persuasive. The victim pursued there is Mr. W. J. Turner, who had, it appears, asserted that great composers, Wagner included, have never been at once understood by their contemporaries. Mr. Newman's contention is that Wagner's only enemies were the gentlemen of the Press and that the public immediately acclaimed him as the great man he was. No doubt this is broadly true, but Mr. Newman would not, of course, go to the trouble of arguing as closely as he does for the sake of supporting a fact that is pretty generally accepted. The matter is really not as simple as it seems to present itself in his pages, and one does not fancy that Mr. Turner, who had only the space of a weekly review article at his disposal, ever imagined that he was dealing with a case of all goats and no sheep. To say roundly that the Press was wholly hostile to Wagner is to wipe the taint of journalism off all the panegyrists whom he found willing to praise his work, while to judge him to have been universally popular because people flocked to performances of his works is to disregard the existence of those who patronise any new art from curiosity or snobbery as well as that of a multitude of people who silently stayed away from the performance of novelties they disliked or failed to understand, a multitude which, just because of its silence, defies statistics. So even Mr. Newman's ingenious classification of the journalistic goats and the opera-going sheep cannot be wholly reliable, and he is perhaps apt to overlook the main characteristic of the latter all too indulgently when he turns what one may call æsthetic gregariousness to account in Wagner's favour, and to the advantage of his own argument.

But even this first part is well worth reading, for many more reasons than that it stimulates controversy, and the whole book may serve capitally to show that musical literature can once in a way be not merely useful to the specialist but extraordinarily entertaining to the general reader. The second half, concerning 'fiction,' is positively

exciting—a thriller almost. There is one tarnished phrase with which the reviewer of books on music has not so far had occasion to stain himself; but he can escape it no longer, so here it is: 'I could not put the book down until I had read it from cover to cover.'

E. B.

Gesammelte Schriften und Vorträge. By Hermann Abert. Edited by Friedrich Blume. Max Niemeyer: Halle a/S.

This collection of twenty-eight long essays, ten of them not previously published, makes a fitting memorial to the great German musicologist, Hermann Abert, who died in 1927. Its six hundred pages make an imposing mass of solid, sterling material, for the author not only had the profoundest knowledge of most things bearing upon music, but the wisdom to deal with no subject he had not studied exhaustively. So far as he intended his articles and lectures to reach, they cover the ground with a completeness that compels admiration.

Certain strong general views held by Abert give an unexpected unity to this book, through which they assert themselves again and again. Without reiterating the principle wearisomely, he is seen, for one thing, to disapprove of the view that musicians necessarily advance as time goes on. He refuses, very sensibly, to make allowances for old music, for which he asks not tolerance, but intelligent understanding. To such understanding he is eminently qualified to help his reader. In his long and brilliant essays on Piccinni and Paisiello, for example, his aim is not to show how much superior Mozart is to these two precursors of his (the latter, by the way, is only just a fore-runner and Abert rather stretches the point), but how much he owed to them. Indeed one might wonder, after a perusal of these studies, whether there is a shred of originality in Mozart, until an actual comparison of his music with theirs reveals his surpassing individuality in a more dazzling light than ever, precisely because we then come to see with how much enterprise he enlivened the forms and formulas which it would be futile to deny he took over wholesale.

Abert is not so shortsighted as to overlook the whole chain of musical evolution, but he also has the common sense and the conscience to test each link. He sees Beethoven as historically dependent on Mozart in some ways, but not as connected with him either as disciple or as reformer. He may possibly decide, after careful study, that Beethoven is greater than Mozart, but he would scorn to come to any such conclusion merely on the ground of their chronological position. This is but the most obvious example of his warning never to rely on wisdom after the event, of which there are many others in the book. Thus we learn not to look upon Gluck's early Italian operas, which conform to the conventions of their day, as predictive of his later reforms. And we are shown how utterly we can be misled if we rely on our latter-day enlightenment in judging the *da capo* aria to be a dead formula. In Abert's clearer view it is an artistic phenomenon that must have been alive before it could die, and in fact once justified itself by a definite æsthetic aim of its own, an aim we must investigate before we can pronounce upon its achievement.

Great historian that he was, Abert is able to correct the superficial critical views of those who cannot see all round certain artistic mani-

festations. In an essay on the relations between text and music in the eighteenth century and in another on Bach he demonstrates convincingly that the current estimate of that master as deficient in literary taste rests on an entirely false basis, not because his taste can be proved to have been good, but because the question simply did not present itself to the church musician of his time.

Throughout this volume the vast importance to the musical historian and critic of a thorough study of literature makes itself felt. Abert knew probably as much about literary as about musical history. Indeed it might be objected that in his consideration of operatic questions, which almost amounts to a speciality with him, he is inclined to base his judgments of various masters' music too frequently on the choice and treatment of their librettos. While he insists, rightly, upon the vast difference between Gluck and Mozart, he does not exemplify it by a purely musical examination, and not even always by their attitude towards their texts: one would think that their musical style was dependent on the character of librettos thrust upon them by the circumstances of their time and environment. Abert almost makes it look as though the rationalist Metastasio and the realist Lorenzo da Ponte had more to do, respectively, with Gluck's musical creation of abstract types and Mozart's of particular characters than they had themselves. Again, his study of Meyerbeer as a musician comes in the last analysis to a judgment of his librettists; Wagner is still regarded by him, as he has been far too long, as a dramatist first and a musician only afterwards; and to read him is to come near the conviction that Handel chose London for his centre mainly because of the superior literary taste of the English in his time. There is some consolation here for the 'land without music,' but unfortunately one cannot forget that Handel first wrote operas for London in a language few of his hearers understood and afterwards composed English oratorio texts that were often anything but masterpieces of poetry.

The essays hang together very well; in fact they overlap a little here and there, which is not surprising in a collection of material not originally intended to appear under one cover. The matter dealt with between the opening article, on the position of music in the culture of the ancients, and the last, on that of music in the education of to-day, shows the author ranging over the centuries with an astonishing assurance of wide learning. Even where the reader happens to know enough to disagree, he does so with a pleasant sense of respect for his eminent opponent.

E. B.

Die Entwicklung der Toccata im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert (bis J. S. Bach). By Erich Valentin. Helios-Verlag, Münster (Westphalia). M. 12.50.

This book appears in a collection of scientific treatises published for the University of Breslau. Both in appearance and in content it bears all the marks of a scholarly dissertation. Packed with facts, elaborately documented (there are 414 footnotes to 143 pages), written with a studied dryness, revealing an extraordinary industry and thoroughness, it admirably serves the twofold end of yielding any amount of instruction and favourably impressing the academic authorities with whom it pleads for a doctor's degree. The title page shows that the distinction

was granted, and no one shall say that it was not richly deserved. Nevertheless, those who avail themselves of the author's labours may wish that he had devised a more practical way of setting forth the results of his investigations. Some sort of tabulated arrangement, a greater number of headings, a choice of musical examples, and above all a copious index would have done much to make a book of this kind more serviceable.

It must be admitted that the impression of a lack of clarity this work gives is inherent in the material itself, which is of a nature apt to cause confusion in the reader's mind. The toccata is not only so loose a form as to defy classification, but the course of its development is constantly troubled by deviations, the influx of some new tributary, the sudden division of one stream into two, the crossing and recrossing of frontiers, and so on. But the subject is a fascinating one, and information concerning it, although available in a number of books, has never been adequately summarised. This Dr. Valentin has done authoritatively, whatever one may say against his manner of presentation.

E. B.

Richard Wagner: Poète et Penseur. By Henri Lichtenberger. Alcan, Paris. Fr. 60.

Der Ideengehalt von Richard Wagners dramatischen Dichtungen im Zusammenhange mit seinem Leben und seiner Weltanschauung. By Arthur Drews. Pfeiffer, Leipzig. M. 20.

It matters to few people to-day whether or not Wagner was a good poet and a profound thinker. Most of us care about his music alone, and only those who assume the fashionable affectation of the day have ceased to admire it, though honest personal dislike may of course go with honest appraisal. Still, even to make up one's mind that Wagner's poetry and philosophy are negligible, it is necessary to be acquainted with them. These two books scarcely touch upon musical matters at all; but they will be found immensely helpful by those who desire to know something about Wagner as an author and about his outlook on life and art without spending the rest of their days reading his voluminous writings, which are here very usefully condensed and clarified.

To the reader who knows both languages one would unhesitatingly recommend to give preference to the French work—and nobody need read both books, for they cover very much the same ground and follow roughly the same plan. M. Lichtenberger, who is professor at the Sorbonne, reasons with the most admirable French lucidity, while Herr Drews, a typically German author in spite of his English-looking name, indulges himself too willingly with the stilted and pseudo-philosophical writing that easily lures German readers into taking obscurity for profundity. His book—to dispose of it first—suffers moreover from a certain extravagance of tone. It claims, for instance (p. 140), for the 'Ring' a deeper and more far-reaching significance as a poetic concept of the world than Dante's 'Divine Comedy' and Goethe's 'Faust.' It is also chauvinistic in its general attitude and uncritical in that towards Wagner, in particular, the author is fond of regarding this or that virtue as great because it is German or as German because it is great, and he permits himself a

modest condemnation of an early work by Wagner only where he has the composer's own sanction (*e.g.*, p. 17). Where any artistic manifestation outside his special subject is concerned, he has the perfect Wagnerite's usual supercilious disregard and lack of independent judgment. When he condemns the Leipzigers of the eighteen-forties for turning down Wagner's 'serious, fundamentally German' opera, 'Die Feen,' in favour of the 'miserable melodies' of Bellini's 'Romeo and Juliet,' one must suspect him of never having looked at the work of the latter master, who was nothing if not a superb melodist, and even of not having studied Wagner's early effort from the point of view in question.

Still, the book has its value for German readers who are not likely to come across or to be able to use M. Lichtenberger's volume, which by a curious coincidence happens to have reached us at the same time. The German author, by the way, seems to be considerably indebted to this, and indeed he frankly refers to it frequently in his footnotes, from which we gather incidentally that it existed as long ago as 1899. The volume published by Alcan this year is in fact marked 'nouvelle édition.' It is brought well up to date, both in the text and in the appended bibliography; on the other hand one could wish that the general revision had gone far enough to eliminate the numerous misprints.

It is possible to think the French professor too anxious to interpret the underlying meaning of Wagner's opera texts, though he is certainly not more so than Wagner was himself. 'Ce dénouement' (in 'Tannhäuser'), says M. Lichtenberger (p. 82), 'parfaitement clair et satisfaisant tant qu'on le considère uniquement au point de vue poétique, devient singulièrement obscur dès qu'on essaye de l'expliquer philosophiquement.' Then, it may be asked, why take the trouble to explain? Is not Wagner's poetry enough—at any rate when it is poetry for his music? The author's justification is that Wagner himself never ceased explaining and that, one must repeat, the world may be glad to have a clear and comparatively concise exposition of his endless lucubrations on and round about his works.

We often get more than one explanation from Wagner, as in the case of his elucidations of 'Tannhäuser,' and it is good to have M. Lichtenberger's guidance in what appears in the original to be a maze of ideas. He frankly accepts the duality of Wagner's outlook, which he shows us as affecting his thought and his writings, both poetical and theoretical, throughout his life. What is more, we understand it far better from his interpretation than we do from Wagner himself, who, if he was a sound philosopher, could not expound his philosophy rationally. Thus we get from this book an idea of how to reconcile the Christian and the pagan in Wagner, the optimist and the pessimist, the sensualist and the mystic, the revolutionary and the royalist. We see, too, how the 'Ring' poem tended towards one side and then took a final turn in a new direction, and we come at least within hailing distance of an understanding of the complex and contradictory character of Kundry, the last and most baffling personification of Wagner's thought.

Perhaps M. Lichtenberger at times subscribes too readily to Wagner's interpretations of his music dramas. A little criticism occasionally would be welcome, more especially as the author is careful to let us know that Wagner worked intuitively and reasoned only after com-

pletion of his artistic task, a process that was, of course, too apt to lead to the attribution, *a posteriori*, of all sorts of subtleties to himself. That Lohengrin's desire to be unquestioningly adored by Elsa, for example, is Wagner's own wish to be loved rather than understood by his public, is a nice fancy; but if that were so, why did Wagner go on and on explaining his intentions. Why, indeed, should M. Lichtenberger explain Wagner?

But this comes near quibbling. The musician cannot be sufficiently grateful for this summary of the indigestible mass of Wagner's writings, with which he must after all be reasonably familiar, though he may have neither the time nor the patience to go to the originals. The author saves him even more than that, for he also gives at the end of his volume a brief outline of Nietzsche's 'Der Fall Wagner,' which shows the causes of a once ardent admirer's defection. (Curiously enough, Herr Drews' book closes with a similar chapter.)

Although M. Lichtenberger says next to nothing about Wagner's music, he does not make the mistake of disputing its supreme importance. It simply does not happen to be the subject of his book, which is the study of a literary scholar, not of a musician. He makes it clear, however, that Wagner wrote his texts as he did because they were meant to serve for music. He shows that the words of 'Tristan,' for instance, now and then become almost inarticulate and clearly 'aspire to the condition of music,' and he would certainly not countenance the absurd notion that recently led to a spoken performance of that work in Germany. One has the impression that, whatever his regard for Wagner as a poet and thinker, he agrees that it is as a composer that he lives, and will live.

E. B.

La Musique dans l'Histoire Générale. By Romain Rolland. Wiedmannsche Buchhandlung, Berlin, 1930.

The subject of this book is music-makers rather than music; its object might be 'Musiciens d'Autrefois' (R. Rolland, Hachette, 1922), 'en Poche' for German schoolboys. As one cannot get it all into one's pocket, the editors have chosen out of it the three shortest essays: *La Musique dans l'Histoire Générale* (an introduction), Grétry and Mozart. They have annotated it (in German) at every point, and for each long French word is given two longer German ones; to make room for this many of M. Rolland's own most interesting notes are left out. To those who have not read 'Musiciens d'Autrefois,' it may be explained that the first essay shows how artistic energy which could not, in times of stress, be consumed in expensive arts—such as architecture—went to the making of great music, and kept up a standard of art in a public otherwise decadent; it is immaterial that most attention is given to French music. And as, to quote M. Rolland, 'L'Étude d'une partie d'architecture, du clocher, par exemple, a pu montrer . . . la pensée de l'Île de France,' the editors have added two 'clochers,' these wholly delightful sketches of Grétry and Mozart (not of their music). Those who read 'Grétry' will know why 'Mozart' was necessary to complete the booklet; he was the musician whom Grétry had imagined and for whom he had longed, but of whose existence he was unaware.

H. A. M.

English Music. By Sir W. H. Hadow. 'The English Heritage' Series. Longmans. 3s. 6d. net.

In writing a 174-page History of English Music, Sir Henry Hadow's first preoccupation must necessarily have been with questions of spacing, and it is in no spirit of disparagement of the wide learning and ready sympathy displayed in this little book that we say that its chief claim to our esteem lies in the way in which the main aspects of the subject are justly accommodated. The tendency in a book of this sort is to skimp the beginnings and to extend unduly accounts of the present time. Sir Henry Hadow does neither, but gives a full specification of the days prior to John of Fornsete and having dealt with the glories of Tudor and Elizabethan music, Purcell, Handel (to whom he is fair), guides us through what he calls the Dark Age until we emerge into the brighter light of the English Renaissance. Here, too, the author is remarkably even-handed in his assessment of the Parry-Stanford period. From then onwards generosity to reputations still in the making brings with it a certain boldness of judgment whose value resides not so much in its critical acumen as in its power to bring the reader up with a jerk and set him thinking for himself. Such are: of Elgar '... he is a greater man than Berlioz,' or of Holst's music '... a superb cycle of orchestral tone-poems entitled "The Planets."' In the first case a noun, in the second an adjective, seems to have gone astray. In the admirable discussion of Vaughan Williams no mention is made of his having studied under Ravel, and 'Flos Campi' is set down as being for 'viol' instead of 'viola.' Otherwise the book is a reliable source of information on a matter which is attracting increasing popular attention.

Dr. Vaughan Williams's Introduction will not be passed over by the musical reader, but in case the more general reader might be tempted to pass it by we take this opportunity of advising the closest consideration being paid thereto. These six-and-a-half pages have a peculiar authority as coming from a leader of the English School. What he says about the aims of that School counts for a great deal and demands diligent scrutiny. In fact, his Introduction can only be properly studied in an article of its own length. Here we must perforce be content with the barest comment. Dr. Vaughan Williams does not mince matters. The gloves are off, the foils unbuttoned. And how the sparks fly! The first paragraph ends with a devastating exposure of the Chelsea painters who 'inherit from Whistler a snobbery which has not yet disappeared.' The second badly trounces a critic who sneered at 'Hodge.' The fourth calls Monteverde, Emmanuel Bach, Liszt and Stravinski 'small,' and Byrd, Purcell, Sullivan, Parry and Elgar 'great.' The fifth talks of 'those whose business it was to nurture,' the 'plant of English musical culture' having failed to do so. And so to the end. One is left with the feeling that here is a generous enthusiasm run riot and a good case loosely stated. Modern English music becomes more splendid every day. It has in it the seeds of a great future. We agree with Dr. Vaughan Williams that 'quietly and unostentatiously' a great tradition may be built up. In other words, it were better to go carefully and in a kindly critical spirit both of the music and the musicians of the day, realising that although Hodge may have only a relative importance with some people, those same people may feel a little hurt at being told that they have 'failed

to notice the modest violets and daisies that were hidden in the grass. 'I know a bank . . . ' though perhaps this is more a question of horticulture than music. But it serves to show that we find beauty where we may, making our own synthesis which may include Hodge and the hydrangea, or the violet and Dr. Vaughan Williams's 'exotic mimosa.' Dr. Vaughan Williams and some of his contemporaries are known and much prized for their sensitiveness to nature, their appreciation of its beauties and their genial ability for transforming that beauty into art. They are not alone in that. We, too, cultivate a small plot. And though we should never call a violet 'modest,' feeling that in doing so we had been blind indeed to its depth of colour and grace of form, yet we know where to find such flowers and how to cherish them. May it not be this in us that, with due respect to Hodge, makes us also turn to and cherish the work of the English School of twentieth century composers?

Sc. G.

Hungarian Folk Music. By Bela Bartók. Translated by M. D. Calvocoressi. London: Humphrey Milford. 21s. net.

In this well-printed book we have a translation of Bela Bartók's study. Mr. Calvocoressi has produced a translation which reads excellently. The labour of doing this must have been no light one, consisting as it did in preparing English versions for the three hundred odd verses or sets of verses which go with the musical examples. The result is often happy and never anything but readable. Of the book itself it only remains to reiterate our sense of its worth for the student of folk music and to welcome its appearance in its present excellent form.

Sc. G.

Alexandre Tansmann. Par Irving Schwerke. Paris: Max Eschig. Fr. 10.

Othmar Schoeck. Von Hans Corrodi. Verlag von Huber. Leipzig. M. 9.50.

The subject of the first of these biographical studies is a Polish composer born in 1897, who, like Chopin, has found his spiritual home in Paris. The biography of one so young cannot but be scanty. In this respect a discussion of his works can only have a relative value, relative to what has not yet appeared. For the rest this booklet gives all available information, is well constructed (short sections dealing with life, works, methods of writing, etc.), and provides a number of musical illustrations which give some idea of the music discussed. It has a distinct 'publicity' flavour, which immediately makes us chary of accepting all the æsthetic judgments pronounced.

The Swiss composer Othmar Schoeck was born in 1886 and studied at the Zürich Conservatoire. His name does not appear in the musical dictionaries, a fact which gives the present biographical study special interest. His fame is evidently great in his own country, and he possesses one national characteristic in a high degree: the ability to

appreciate the methods of neighbouring lands and to utilise them. On the whole his music tends towards Germany, though there is evidence (as much as can be gathered from the illustrations to this volume) that he is not unaware of changing tendencies in that and other countries. The excerpts from 'Penthesilea' (1925) show strength and have some originality of facture. 'Lebendig begraben' (1926) awakens interest, a cycle of fourteen poems by Keller for voice and orchestra. The latest composition is a cycle of ten songs (words by Hermann Hesse) with pianoforte accompaniment. This book is carefully and sympathetically written, as well as being extremely well produced.

Sc. G.

Musicologisch Onderzoek. I. Over zeldzame fluiten . . . in het Ngada-en Nageh-gebied. Door J. Kunst. II. Songs of North New Guinea. By J. Kunst. Batavia: Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunst en Wetenschappen.

In the West Flores region of the Dutch Indies there exist a number of double and triple flutes of unusual form. Mijnheer Kunst has made a study of these and has been able to collect and photograph certain examples. The double flutes differ from each other: one sort is formed of two separated tubes, held at a wide angle, each with its own mouthpiece as in the Chinese double flute or the ancient *auloi*. A second sort has one mouthpiece covering the two tubes. Yet a third has one tube stopped, one open, the player's breath being led into the stopped tube by means of a device below the stopping. The triple flutes are all of one type: the middle tube has no finger holes, being used as a drone. A further type of native flute described here is the bass flute which is indirectly blown: that is, the mouthpiece is contained in a separate tube connected with the tube proper. Mijnheer Kunst's clear exposition of these interesting instruments and the method the natives employ in using them has had the result of producing a pamphlet not only valuable as research but distinctly attractive to study. The pamphlet is in Dutch.

The other pamphlet in this series, by the same author, has to do with Papuan native song. The writer traces influences from Australian sources and some from Malay-Polynesia. An interesting selection of melodies is included at the end of the pamphlet, as well as information as to gramophone records lately made by the Columbia (Australian) Company which we should willingly like to see in this country. This pamphlet is in English.

Sc. G.

The men behind the music. Routledge. 2s. 6d. net.

Some time ago the editor of the *Radio Times*, in pursuance of a general policy of popularisation, decided that the great composers should be given over to a number of writers to discuss and that these writers should have one common qualification: they were not to be musicians, or, rather, not writers, in the first place, on music. It was not knowledge of Music but of Men that was required of them, a task demanding literary gifts more than those of the researcher.

The result (eminently readable and pleasant) is contained in this book where are collected a number of such essays. As literary compositions their value, as is natural, varies. The best by far is Sacheverell Sitwell's description of Mendelssohn's rise to fame. There is nothing said one had not heard before, but the scanty musical matter is arranged with perfect skill and the whole thing reads delightfully. (Weber's librettist was called Planché, not as printed in this essay.) Next in interest are two essays by C. Henry Warren, on Handel and Mussorgsky, helpful accounts which avoid on the one hand merely clever comment and on the other a pedestrian description of events. The writer on Brahms condescends to the solecism 'our young genius'; in the essay on Mozart the unwary reader must be careful of such a phrase as 'little, wandering noises like Debussy' which has more to do with the writer behind the article (and thus has its own value) but not a great deal with the man behind the music, still less with the music itself. However, it were unfair to judge this collection by standards of musicianship. It is evidently meant to satisfy or create other needs than musical and in that is successful.

Sc. G.

Marimba-Musik. By Siegfried Nadel. Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, Wien und Leipzig. Text 55 pp., music 7 pp., 2 plates.

A thoughtfully written contribution to the study of primitive folk music, interesting alike to musician and expert. Nadel does not solve the puzzle of the scale in which Marimba (=African Xylophone) music is expressed, although he has a better grasp of the nature of the problem than other investigators. The equipment of such workers should certainly include a thorough knowledge of the acoustic properties and laws embodied in the structure and fingerholes of wind instruments, for inscribed in these are the only absolutely infallible records we possess of the basis of bygone and folk music.

The pamphlet provides concise data of provenance and of ethnological influence, analyses of the tuning of the instruments and of the music read from phonograms; the author regrets—as we do—that the latter were obtained, not from the instruments in the Vienna Museum (of which photographic illustrations are given), but from others which he did not see. Nadel is but a hesitating advocate of the scale of 'approximately' (sic) equal intervals, and rightly so, for his readings betray unmistakable traces of the modality primarily derived from the fingerholes of wind instruments, of which approximate equality of intervals is frequently significant.

KATHLEEN SCHLESINGER.

The History and Art of Change-ringing. By Ernest Morris. Chapman and Hall. 25s. net.

On the art of change-ringing many books have been written, from Fabian Stedman's *Tintinnalogia*, published in 1668, to the present day, but anything like a complete history has never before been attempted. Both as a ringer of wide experience and an archæologist, the author is admirably qualified for the task, and he has carried it out thoroughly.

The opening chapter ranges over four continents in a general survey, concluding with a lucid and practical description of English methods

of hanging, ringing and chiming. The development of bellringing is traced from medieval references to its definite establishment as a science in the seventeenth century. Nearly 250 pages are then occupied with extracts from the records of ancient ringing societies. On the historical side this may be regarded as the most valuable part of the book. Mention may be made of the 'ordinances' drawn up for the ringers of Lincoln Cathedral in 1612, also of the opening of the bells at Ashton-under-Lyne, which 'merrily lasted four days,' continuing on the second day till after midnight. Most appropriately this work makes its appearance in the year which marks the tercentenary of the birth of Fabian Stedman, the 'Father of the art.' Mr. Morris describes his visit to Leicester in 1669, and records the longest peal ever rung by one set of men—21,363 changes of Stedman Caters, at Appleton, Berks, on April 22, 1922, in 12 hours and 25 minutes—though a further chapter is assigned to 'First and Record Peals,' also 'Unique Peals,' such as those rung entirely by clergymen, by Army officers, Freemasons or—typical sign of the times—by ladies. Ringers and composers of renown, ringers' rules and customs, and incidentally ringers' jugs, all receive notice, and he even includes an account of accidents in the belfry, followed—apparently *pour encourager les autres*—by detailed directions for a muffled peal!

The technical part of the book explains the various methods by diagrams and figures. One chapter is devoted to handbell ringing. It is a curious circumstance that the earliest mention of change-ringing on handbells is that of a course of cinquies rung by college youths at Calais in 1732, and it is of interest that since the publication of Mr. Morris's book three complete peals have been performed by English ringers on the Continent, two in Belgium and one in France. The book concludes with an account of the Central Council of Church Bellringers, and is furnished with three useful appendices and a double index. It is attractively got up, and the large number of fine illustrations is a great feature. Inaccuracies are rare. There is an obvious clerical error on page 263, and the title of figure 33 gives a false impression. A certain amount of redundancy is observable. The description on page 5 of the ringers at Seville Cathedral flying round with the bells is out of date, though that is still done at another church in that city. These are quite insignificant defects in what will now be the standard work.

F. LL. EDWARDS.

The Rebirth of Hindu Music. By D. Rudhyar. Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar. Rupees 3.12.

To avoid misunderstanding it is as well to say that this book is not about music, but about the application to it of theosophy. For history, logic, mathematics, philology, and the problems of civilisation the writer has the contempt of ignorance, as it would be easy to show if there were space, and if the book were worth it. As to the soundness of the theosophy we are unable to judge. On its application to music there is, since the death of Scriabin, probably no European who could give an opinion, except perhaps Mr. Cyril Scott.

A. H. F. S.

Der Fagott. Von W. Heckel. C. Merseburger: Leipzig, 1931. 8vo. M. 2.40.

This little book of 44 closely printed pages replaces the very rare work on the same subject published by the present writer's father in 1899. It summarises also, as a centenary volume should, the ideals and activities of three generations of Heckels who have specialised in the manufacture of wood-wind instruments at Biebrich. To the musician the name Heckel suggests the heckelphone as inevitably as Sax the saxophone. To fagottists of the German school it suggests the bassoon, for it is the only system of bassoon played upon in Central Europe. In other countries, especially in those under the influence of French ideas, the Savary model perfected by Jancourt and Buffet holds the field to the exclusion of other types. The two are essentially different in all that matters—in bore, in positioning of tone holes, in mechanism and in material. The German model has been developed on rational, the French on empirical lines. As might be expected therefore the tone of the two instruments is radically different: the German has a fuller, broader, more incisive tone, the French a softer, rounder, more vocal quality which possibly blends more perfectly with the other wood-wind. The ingenious mechanism of the Heckel is a recommendation to the virtuoso; and it is significant that more than one leading English artist is turning to the German model.

The heckelphone, to which some pages are devoted, was designed by the author of the present work and his father at the suggestion of certain leading German composers to fill the gap between oboe and bassoon. It is pitched in C an octave below the former and has a robust, fully coloured tone which has nothing in common with either cor anglais or baritone oboe. Its use at present has been practically limited to Germany and Central Europe. The B.B.C., however, has recently acquired a specimen and it will be interesting to see if its tone is agreeable to English listeners.

But the activities of the firm are not limited to the making of bassoons and heckelphones. In addition to oboes, flutes and clarinets, such uncommon instruments as oboi d'amore, clarinetti d'amore, basset-horns and contra bass clarinets are made, and fully illustrated and described in the book under review. The author lays great stress on the use of appropriate materials in the interests of *Modulationsfähigkeit* and the full development of the overtones peculiar to each instrument; thus soft woods are invariably used for bass, tenor and alto instruments, hard woods for the higher pitches. Incidentally, the author is opposed to Boehm principles in flute and clarinet construction; beauty of tone and flexibility must come before ease of execution. An interesting account of the making of a bassoon concludes the book, which is lavishly illustrated and commendably free from misprints.

F. G. R.

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Chamber Music.

Eugene Goossens: *Sonata No. 2 for violin and pianoforte*. [Chester.] An extended first movement (*Moderato con anima*). An Intermezzo (*à la Sicilienne*). A Finale (*Molto moderato*) balancing the first movement in length. This work is dated August, 1930, and was performed at the International Festival this year. It has all Goossens's harmonic abundance, his reliance on colour to carry a work through and on rhythmic variety to supply vitality. There is no contrapuntal work here, no working-out of horizontal lines (since there are no tunes) and so none of the sense of inevitable development that counterpoint brings (as in Vaughan Williams or Bax). Instead there is a series of patterns, manipulated in such a way as to give a satisfying sense of form. The interest lies in the changing shapes of these patterns and as soon as the music is accepted on that basis its quality can be realised at its true nature, which is primarily decorative. It is hardly necessary to say that this sonata needs capable players. Ensemble will not easily be attained through the mazes of these shifting tempi.

Choral Works.

Delius: *Songs of Farewell*. [Winthrop Rogers.] This setting of four passages from Walt Whitman is dated 1930. Involuntarily the listener's thought is carried back to that other earlier setting of Whitman, 'Sea Drift,' which is Delius at his greatest. Comparing this work with that, the later one, with certain characteristics in common, seems a less fluent composition. The line is stiffer, the build more sectional, the movement from section to section a little angular. But this work has beauty and a character of its own, especially in the third movement 'Passage to you' where the choral writing is splendid.

Robin Milford: *A prophet in the land*. [Oxford University Press.] This work is down for performance at the Three Choirs Festival this year. The copy before us is termed: Chorus edition. It therefore has no solo matter (the work is for baritone, soprano and tenor soli, chorus and orchestra) and although it gives a favourable idea of the cantata, does not allow of complete knowledge. There seems to be a Prologue and three acts (the work is called a Dramatic Oratorio) so that probably there is some intention of eventual stage production. The music of the choruses makes use of some interesting devices, for instance, the monotone on low G for bass and alto (*Adagio*) to the words 'Domine Deus salutis meae . . .' which persists for twenty-four bars against changing harmonies in the orchestra, rising to the fifth above on the words 'Posuerunt me in lacuna inferiori. . .'. Contrapuntal and fugal writing is employed frequently.

Small orchestra.

Delius: *Two pieces for violoncello and chamber orchestra.* [Hawkes.] The first of these (Caprice) is slight, forty-nine bars built up out of one five-note figure in the 'cello and a series of harp arpeggios. The second piece (Elegy) is a more extended movement, still quite simple in form. Neither piece is difficult technically. They are dated 1930.

Full orchestra.

Delius: *A song of summer.* [Winthrop Rogers.] Also dated 1930. This can successfully stand comparison with the composer's best short orchestral pieces 'Summer night on the river,' 'In a summer garden' which are evocative of a moody tranquillity. Here, too, the divided strings move vaguely through tenuous sequences while the wood-wind flutters about among bird-like figures until the music stirs and reaches to a rich, full climax, then dies away. This is pure Delius, as exquisite as ever.

Miniature Orchestral Scores.

Wagner: *Tannhäuser.* Mozart: *Don Giovanni.* [Eulenburg.] It seems late in the day to draw attention to this series of miniature scores issued by the firm of Eulenburg of Leipzig. The use of miniature scores is increasing and will increase still more as the general public takes (as we firmly believe it is taking) a more intelligent technical interest in music. It is well, therefore, that the printing of this kind of music is undertaken nowadays in a careful and effective manner. The utility of these scores is hard to exaggerate, especially when it is possible to listen to a concert, by wireless, or play a symphony, on the gramophone, in the privacy of one's study. Even more so when an opera is broadcast, a form of entertainment in which the miniature score is tantalisingly useless in a darkened opera house, but now is a perfect adjunct to the loud-speaker. The two opera scores here under review are admirably printed, the paper a little glaringly white, but the whole page wonderfully clear. *Tannhäuser* has the *Varianten der Pariser Bearbeitung* included in the same volume (or to be had separately).

Bach: *Kantate No. 55. 'Ich armer Mensch.'* Johann Strauss: *Wiener Blut.* [Eulenburg.] Two smaller publications of the same firm to which remarks as above apply with regard to excellence of format.

Sc. G.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Bachelin, Henri. *Les maîtrises et la musique de chœur.* Paris: Au Ménestrel. 5.25 fr.
 Eason, James. *The book of the Great Music.* London: Humphrey Milford. 2s. 6d. net.
 Heller, M. P. *Die Musik als Geschenk der Natur.* Berlin: Birnbach. 4.80 M.
 Kurth, Ernst. *Musikpsychologie.* Berlin: Max Hesse. 13.50 M.
 Müller, Erich H. *Die Musiksammlung der Bibliothek zu Kronstadt.* Kronstadt: Johann Gött's Sohn.
 Schünemann, Georg. *Musikerziehung.* Leipzig: Kistner & Siegel. 9.50 M.

REVIEWS OF PERIODICALS

la Revue Musicale. Paris. May.

A lengthy study of Holst by Suzanne Demarquez is important not only for its sympathetic insight and the justice of the author's conclusions but also for the very fact of its appearance in this company. This must be one of the first instances of an article in French on a modern English composer. A. Machabey contributes a further section of his analysis of the works of Guillaume de Machault, the fourteenth century French poet and musician. A short note on the early years of Grétry makes pleasant reading. Charles Kœchlin's article, 'Musique et mathématique,' is a more exacting task, though it is worth following the author *à la recherche de la vérité*, as he puts it.

July-August.

A number of unusual interest entitled 'Géographie Musicale 1931' in which the present state of music in Europe and the Americas is discussed in a series of illuminating articles. In the circumstances we may be permitted to turn first of all to that by Suzanne Demarquez dealing with Great Britain. This is an excellent piece of work, enthusiastic and fully sympathetic but at the same time discriminating. Starting with Elgar (two paragraphs which with masterly compression give all the main details) we are taken via Delius and Holbrooke to Holst and Vaughan Williams ('les préraphaélites, Walt Whitman, Rossetti, Bunyan' is a little surprising). Thence to Frank Bridge, Bax, Berners and Bliss to Walton, Lambert and Howells. The article ends with a very handsome tribute to the musicalness of the English, with special reference to the way in which Londoners crowd to the Proms 'en plein mois d'août . . . par 30° de chaleur. . . . Tout en exprimant à Gustav Holst mon admiration pour un tel spectacle, je ne pouvais m'empêcher de songer qu'il serait bien impossible à Paris dans les mêmes conditions.' This article deserves to be read widely. We may now no longer complain that our native music is either ignored or superficially commented upon abroad. The rest of this number is equally worth attention and although it is only possible to do little more here than give mere titles, the reader is strongly advised to give close consideration to the contents of the different articles. Especially valuable are those on Germany (Armand Machabey), France (the Editor), Hungary (Emile Haraszati), Italy (Guido Gatti), Poland (Mateusz Gliniski), Russia (Arthur Lourié) and Brazil (Renée de Saussine). The number ends with an obituary of André Tessier, the noted French musicologist.

La Revue de Musicologie. Paris. May.

Georges de Saint-Foix contributes an article on Johann Michael Haydn's influence on Mozart, using as example two of Haydn's piano-forte trios. An 'Essai sur la méthode en musicologie' by A. Machabey is enlightening. Georges le Cerf writes at length on a sixteenth century Latin MS. that deals with the clavichord. The late André Tessier is represented by an article on the catalogue of the Bibliothèque du Roi at Versailles.

Note D'Archivio. Rome. April.

The second number of a new quarterly dealing with the historical aspect of music. An article by L. Werner describes a manuscript volume from a Hungarian library (Szombathely) containing works by Josquin, Mouton and others. M. de Carolis contributes an article on 'La capella musicale della Ven. collegiata S. Lorenzo in Sant'Oreste sul Monte Soratte.' Of more general interest is an informative article on music in fifteenth and sixteenth century Parma by N. Pelicelli. The editor (Raffaele Casimiri) discusses the mention of Josquin and of Phinot by the poet Francesco Spinola.

Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft. Leipzig. May.

Unison songs written for use in the Gymnasium Paulinus at Münster in the sixteenth century (thus some of the earliest known school music) are the subject of an article by Karl Gustav Fellerer. This is a noteworthy piece of research. The examples given make one wonder how the present-day schoolboy would fare when faced with music of this kind. In an article by Günther Kraft the work of the sixteenth century German composer Johann Steurlein is dealt with. The correspondence between Goethe and the musician Zelter form the basis of an article by Paul Mies. The MS. of Beethoven's violin concerto is examined in an article by Oswald Jonas. Alfred Seiffert writes on the latest research on matters to do with string tone.

Zeitschrift für Musik. Regensburg. July.

A Wagner number, illustrated with stage designs by Prof. Hans Wildermann. Five hitherto unknown letters from Wagner to Düflip are printed and repay reading. Prof. Wildermann writes on the lighting of the operas. Bayreuth and its future is discussed.

Music in New Zealand. Wellington, N.Z. April.

We welcome the appearance of the first number of this colonial musical monthly. A short study of Delius by John Dene makes a good beginning. Broadcasting is discussed by John Bishop in a sensible article. The first of a series of notes on leading N.Z. musicians has Dr. J. C. Bradshaw, organist of Christchurch Cathedral.

May.

The best of this number is contained in articles by S. Kenneth Phillips (songs by modern British composers) and on music in London (a rather discursive musical letter by Valerie C. Corliss).

De Musiek. Amsterdam. June.

The main matter in this number consists in an article by Willi Reich which has for its subject Josef Matthias Hauer, the modern Viennese composer, the originator of 'twelve-tone music.' The article is informative of Hauer's career, leaving discussion of his theories on one side. Dr. Erwin Felber writes on the relations of virtuosi and composers.

La Rassegna Musicale. Turin. May.

From A. Parente there comes a second article on the æsthetic of modern Italian music with special reference to Torrefranca. An article by A. Schaeffner deals illuminatingly with E. T. A. Hoffmann's ideas about music as contained in his letters and other writings.

Sc. G.

GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

Orchestral

COLUMBIA.—Liszt: *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 4 in D* (the Hallé Orchestra conducted by Sir Hamilton Harty). This rhetorical composition serves its purpose here of showing off a first-class orchestra. The playing is vivid, with each different instrumental cadenza and solo expertly done.

Johann Strauss: *Thousand and one nights Waltz* (the British Symphony Orchestra conducted by Weingartner). The playing of this light Viennese music is chiefly noteworthy for its sturdiness. The orchestra (new to us though the name was synonymous with good work some ten years ago) goes undeviatingly through with its task, giving a fair account of itself, taking no liberties with the music.

Bizet: *Carmen Fantasia* (the B.B.C. Wireless Military Band conducted by B. Walton O'Donnell). Good garden-party record or for a large room, its noisiness to be tamed to taste by distance.

H.M.V.—Elgar: *Nursery Suite* (the L.S.O. conducted by the composer). On four sides are reproduced the seven movements of Elgar's latest work, the Suite dedicated to the Duchess of York and her two daughters. It made a valuable preparation for the first public performance. Equally it has been found useful as a means of taking further stock of the music and repeating at will those sections that gave most pleasure, mainly the quieter ones which have an authentic note of childlike simplicity. Given the circumstances of recording there is no need to draw attention to the authoritative quality of this issue.

Edward German: *Welsh Rhapsody* (the L.S.O. conducted by Sir Landon Ronald). There is something of a symphonic breadth about this rhapsody which makes it more than a mere stringing together of popular airs. The performance seems a sound one, the recording is excellently true. The four sides will be welcomed by those who are willing to explore those aspects of musical composition which often surprisingly escape notice.

Haydn: *Symphony No. 6 in G, The Surprise* (the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitsky). Splendid playing, balanced and graceful. It is difficult, as well as invidious, to choose between the four movements in the performance of this orchestra. Perhaps the chief delight of the whole thing resides in the way the music is followed with the utmost simplicity of interpretation so that it comes direct to the listener. There is no 'personal' reading here, a fact which makes one feel that those who made the record are artists.

Liszt: *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 1 in F* (the L.S.O. conducted by Albert Coates). The most widely known of the set, played here with vitality and energy. Some of the instrumental recording lacks character. For the rest the record is to be recommended.

Mozart: *Overture to 'Don Giovanni'* (conducted by Clemens Schmalstich). A thoroughly reliable record, well played, clearly reproduced and in no way romanticised or otherwise manhandled.

Three potpourris remain to be considered. That of the 'Bartered Bride' by Smetana (a symphony orchestra conducted by Clemens Schmalstich) is useful as preparation for the forthcoming production of the opera here. That of Waltzes by Johann Strauss is noisy (Marek Weber). It will certainly be popular. So, too, the 'Princess Ida' selection (conducted by Malcolm Sargent), which is well played.

POLYDOR.—Bach: *Brandenburg concerto No. 3 in G* (Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Furtwängler). There seems nothing wrong with this record, one of the most excellent we have met since long. The combination of dignity and grace in the playing is notable. No one should miss getting these three sides. As further recompense they will have a performance of Schubert's 'Rosamunde' music on the fourth side which is in every way as fine as the Bach.

Wagner: *Tristan, Prelude to Act 1, Closing scene of Act 3* (Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Furtwängler). As in the last-mentioned records there is here a perfectly faithful, restrained interpretation, an example of how to leave even such well-known music to itself. The two records make a precious possession. In Isolde's death scene it is interesting to be able to follow the fabric of the music without the voice part, an absence which leaves a good many things clearer than generally they appear. Alternatively, with the full score before one, it is possible to fill in the voice part oneself, an occupation that is both instructive and thrilling.

Pianoforte

COLUMBIA.—Rachmaninov: *Preludes in G minor and C sharp minor* (William Murdoch). Apart from a tendency on the part of the pianist to hurry certain phrases, making for a decided thickening of some passages, these two sides, especially in quieter moments, are worth hearing.

H.M.V.—Debussy: *Le vent dans la plaine* and *Minstrels* (Paderewski). Both of these sound a little dry and the pianoforte tone somewhat hollow. The playing is delightful.

POLYDOR.—Chopin: *Preludes* (Brailovsky). Especially the quick preludes come off well on this double side (two preludes, an etude and the A major impromptu). The playing is of the finest, clear and supple. Another record by the same pianist offers Chopin's posthumous Waltz in E minor and Debussy's Toccata in C sharp minor, equally finely done. Both records are much to be recommended.

Organ

H.M.V.—Bach: *Fantasia and Fugue in C minor* (Dr. W. G. Alcock). This is very fine playing. The recording suffers from echo, though not enough to mar the general good effect of the performance.

Bach: *Toccata and Fugue in C major* (G. D. Cunningham). Although played in the same hall (the Alexandra Palace), this record, at least as regards the Toccata, does not suffer so markedly from echo. It would seem, therefore, that registration must be carefully looked to in recording organ music in this building. This record, also, is a fine piece of playing.

Opera

H.M.V.—Verdi: *Il Trovatore* (No. 117 of the Album Series of complete works. In Italian. Orchestra of La Scala, Milan, conducted by Carlo Sabajno. Italian cast). Apart from the chorus singing, which is woolly and in the 'Miserere' distressingly out of tune, the preparation of this set of fifteen records has been carefully made. Irene Minghini-Cattaneo's singing is always true (Azucena) and her interpretation a telling one. Aureliano Pertile (Manrico) also comes through excellently, making the duet with Azucena, 'Ai nostri monti,' one of the striking moments in this series. Maria Carena (Leonora) has too much *vibrato*. Apollo Granforte (di Luna) is inclined to force his voice out of pitch. Nevertheless, all the parts, including the lesser ones, are effectively dealt with, and the record as a whole is a notable achievement. Above all, it gives a unique opportunity for close study of the opera, further aid being afforded by the libretto (Italian and English) which is provided.

Chamber Music

H.M.V.—Schubert: *Duo for pianoforte and violin in A major* (Rachmaninov and Kreisler). In this case, though there is no rule for it, great names may safely be taken as earnest of great performance. The playing of these three records is impeccable and the way the music is treated leaves nothing for the musical listener to wish otherwise.

Instrumental Solos

H.M.V.—Manuel de Falla: *Jota* (Kreisler). An exquisite little record. Some listeners may feel it worth while to acquire the technique of taking the needle from the plate just before the final squeak of the fiddle, an astonishingly inept piece of editing. On the reverse is a delightful performance of Glazounov's *Serenade Espagnole*.

Popper: *Masurka op. 11, No. 3* (Casals). The music says little enough, so one is forced back on other considerations. Fortunately they exist, and of a quality undeniably high: Casals playing at his finest with tone, intonation and rhythm perfect. On the reverse an equally satisfying performance of a Bach *Musette*.

Educational

H.M.V.—A single record of a *German Language Course* has been sent us. But even that is better than none, for nothing gives a more arresting idea of the educational value of the gramophone than these language records. There is probably no need to recommend this record, but the opportunity may be taken to register unstinted approval. One criticism must be offered in this case: the speaker's German is, of course, excellent, but his English does not come through clearly, and he would be well advised to take more care over such things as 'speech-sounds' (such we gather this special mumble to be), and to choose some other word than 'doggerel,' where the English 'r' is evidently a difficulty.

Sc. G.

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